

Mountjoy School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113957
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	357452
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Christine Emerson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Davies
Headteacher	Mr James Franzen
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
School address	Flood Lane Dorset DT6 3QG
Telephone number	01308 422250
Fax number	01308 458664
Email address	office@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk

Age group	3–19
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2011
Inspection number	357452

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed six lessons or part lessons. All teachers were seen leading lessons. The inspector had discussions with pupils, staff and three governors. She observed the school's work and examined the files of one vulnerable pupil in detail, as well as the school's assessment and tracking files, to see how well the school meets pupils' individual needs and checks their progress. A wide range of documentation was also scrutinised, including the school's transformation plan and policy documents for safeguarding and other statutory requirements. The inspector looked at the 30 questionnaires which had been returned by parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether provision is suitably adapted to ensure that all groups of pupils, such as those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), make good progress.
- How well pupils with challenging behaviour, including those in the annex, respond to the school's strategies to improve their behaviour.
- How effectively the school is delivering a broad curriculum given the nature of the accommodation.

Information about the school

This is a small special school which serves a wide catchment area across West Dorset. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A very large majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties. Some pupils have autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), profound and multiple learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are only a few girls in the school. The vast majority have a White British background with a few pupils who are White European and speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The very few children of nursery age learn alongside pupils in Year 1. Post-16 students are taught as a discrete class. The school gained the Healthy Schools Plus award in June 2010 and also holds the International School award (Intermediate). Plans are in place for the school to move into a new building co-located with Beaminster School in September 2012.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Mountjoy is an outstanding school. The previous inspection report highlighted a number of outstanding aspects, and in particular the excellent personal development of the pupils. The new leadership team has been extremely effective in building on this very strong base and the school has therefore improved rapidly. Every aspect of the school's performance is very carefully evaluated and planning for future developments, such as the move to the new site, is exceptionally well focused. An extremely strong sense of purpose is evident throughout the school and all staff are highly committed to providing the very best education for the pupils. Relationships are excellent and staff understand the pupils' needs very well. As a result, pupils feel very safe and well supported. Although pupils are very excited about the move to the new building, they say that there is nothing at all about the school that they would like to change as they like everything just as it is.

Excellent links with parents, carers and a wide range of outside agencies ensure that the pupils are extremely well cared for. Procedures to manage and record instances of challenging behaviour, along with individual risk assessments for the most challenging pupils, are exemplary. The records demonstrate the exceptionally good progress the pupils make in improving their behaviour. This excellent practice is used as a model within the local authority and the deputy headteacher is very active in successful outreach and training initiatives. Behaviour throughout the school is excellent and pupils take great care of each other. This was very evident in a meeting with the pupils, when a pupil in Year 8 made huge efforts to support a younger pupil with communication difficulties to express his views. Pupils are given very good guidance. For example, excellent strategies are in place to ensure that pupils can make a full contribution to their annual review and participate in decisions about their future.

The school has been very creative in making best use of the space it has and overcoming the limitations in the accommodation. Even so, these do restrict opportunities for physical development in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result of outstanding partnerships with other schools, use of community facilities and engagement of specialist staff such as visiting artists, the school is still able to offer an excellent variety of lively activities. The reorganisation of teaching groups has enabled the school to deliver a curriculum that is highly appropriate to the age of the pupils. However, the school rightly recognises that it needs to extend opportunities for accreditation for students in the sixth form. The quality of lesson planning is excellent and teachers are extremely skilled at using information gained from assessment to match work set to the learning levels of individual pupils. Teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of suitable strategies for pupils with additional needs such as autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) or sensory impairment. The school's very detailed analysis of its high quality pupil records demonstrates very clearly that pupils of all ages, including those with additional needs, learn well and make good progress. This was confirmed in lesson observations undertaken

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

by the inspector. Teaching is never less than good with an increasing amount of outstanding teaching. However, on a very small number of occasions the lessons do not move on quickly enough and pupils lose focus. A rigorous system of lesson observations is in place and the school is highly effective in addressing any weaknesses to improve the quality of teaching. At the present time all observations are conducted by the leadership team. This restricts teachers' opportunities to share good practice. The school's current performance, its accurate self-evaluation and excellent understanding of the key areas for development, and the highly effective manner in which it is addressing these all demonstrate an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - increasing opportunities for teachers and other staff to observe lessons and thereby identify best practice for themselves
 - ensuring that lessons always proceed at a good pace with well-timed activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils enjoy lessons a great deal and are very keen to participate in all activities. Because work is well adapted to meet their individual needs, all groups of pupils learn well and make good progress. An example of this was in an outstanding literacy lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3 where the objective was for pupils to learn to make marks. A variety of very stimulating resources, including an interactive whiteboard, really motivated and engaged the pupils. Pupils with visual impairment or complex learning difficulties were given excellent support to feel lines such as Velcro strips and ribbons hanging on poles, and then to make the mark on the board. Higher attaining pupils were challenged very well and copied simple figures. As a result all pupils, irrespective of their particular learning needs, made excellent progress in mark making. The school is very skilled at using calm withdrawal spaces, such as the annex, to enable pupils with very challenging behaviour to manage their own behaviour. However, the school is also highly inclusive and is effective in giving these pupils opportunities to interact with others wherever possible. As a result, they make good progress in learning how to behave appropriately in the classroom environment. Pupils make excellent progress in learning to stay healthy and gain huge enjoyment from sporting activities such as water polo. The school's strengths in health education are recognised through the Healthy Schools Plus award. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school's own development and have been very involved in designing and planning for the new building. They are keen recyclers and are proud to take part in the 'Rights Respecting Town' events in Bridport. Because pupils enjoy coming to school, their attendance is good. An excellent focus on developing independent living skills ensures pupils make particularly good progress in personal, social, health and citizenship education and prepares them very well for life in the community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The weekly whole school foci such as 'working as a team' and 'helping someone who is upset' enables pupils to make great strides in developing important social skills. As a result of very good links with schools in Uganda and America, which are recognised through the International School award, the pupils make very good progress in learning about other cultures.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and improving markedly in response to the school's effective use of strategies such as mentoring by members of the leadership team. Staff give pupils excellent support but also encourage independence wherever possible. This means that pupils look to achieve their learning objectives for themselves and begin to take some responsibility for their own learning. A consistent format is used throughout the school to plan lessons. This provides an excellent framework for learning and ensures that in all lessons each pupil has clear and detailed learning targets. As a consequence, teachers are able to keep good records of pupils' progress in lessons. They use this information well to match work exactly to pupils' levels and to plan for future learning. Teachers make very good use of resources, including information and communication technology, to engage the pupils and promote learning. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Years 10 to 13, where the teacher had prepared an excellent PowerPoint presentation to teach the pupils about managing money. Because the slides were all of facilities in the local community the pupils could relate to them. This generated some very good discussion about what you do in a bank. Almost all activities in lessons are just the right length to maintain pupils' interest and lessons are lively and fast paced. However, on the small minority of occasions

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

when activities go on too long or the pace is too slow, pupils lose interest and learning time is lost. Pupils derive huge enjoyment from the wide variety of stimulating enrichment opportunities which are offered as part of the excellent curriculum. The curriculum is very well adapted for individual pupils' special needs. For example, pupils with ASD have consistent access to suitable materials such as visual timetables. This enables them to participate fully and learn as well as other pupils. Strong structures and very detailed planning underpin the excellent quality of care, guidance and support. High quality care and individual education plans are in place and well used.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides exceptionally clear direction both in terms of his ambition for his pupils and for his expectations of staff. The school has developed a very strong emphasis on child-centred working. This provides an excellent steer for staff and results in the very supportive and nurturing ethos which permeates all aspects of school life. An example of this is the personal way in which every pupil is welcomed to school on arrival. The staff team, which includes a number of recent appointments, are extremely well focused on improvement and very open to implementing new systems to make the school even better. All initiatives arise from very careful monitoring and evaluation. Planning records demonstrate clearly the excellent progress the school is making towards achieving the aspirational targets in the 'Transformation' plan. The leadership team has ensured that the whole school community has embraced the exciting challenge of planning for the move to the new school. Outstanding oversight of teaching and learning has ensured that assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are now more accurate and used very effectively to set challenging targets for learning. The leadership team has a very good understanding of the strengths in teaching and which areas need to be developed further to raise pupils' achievement. However, as the school recognises, teachers and support staff are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the quality of lessons. The governors have a good range of relevant experience and expertise and support the school very well, particularly with regards to improving accommodation. They are now embracing their role of critical friend and are beginning to challenge the school more. Promoting equality of opportunity is central to the work of the school and is supported extremely well by the excellent monitoring of pupils' progress. Community cohesion is promoted effectively, particularly within the local community. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding and fully meet all statutory requirements. Extremely rigorous systems ensure that there is a very comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues throughout the school. The school makes the very best use of its resources and provides excellent value for money.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The small number of children in the Nursery are taught with Year 1 pupils. Excellent links with parents and health professionals ensure that children settle very quickly and make a good start to their education. Staff give the children excellent individual support and they are very well cared for. This enables the children to feel very secure and happy so that they can learn well. Teaching is good, and during individual work sessions activities are very well matched to individual pupil ability and need. However, on occasions, activities such as story time do not make sufficient use of the full range of sensory resources that are available in the classroom. Good use of assessment and tracking allows staff to ensure children make good progress in key areas such as developing communication and social skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The school has done its very best to improve the accommodation and enlarge the outside area but it is still small and restricts opportunities for outside play.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Sixth form

The sixth form offers a good quality of education for the students. Teaching is good, although occasionally the pace of the lesson could be a little faster to maximise students' learning. Otherwise, there is a very good match of work set to individual students' learning levels. This was evident in a mini-enterprise session where students were making meals to sell to staff, which they evidently enjoyed. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties made good progress in using switches to make fruit smoothies in the liquidiser, while higher attaining students were encouraged to work well independently preparing soup and bread. All students tried extremely hard and behaved very sensibly when using the cooker and other equipment. Very carefully adjusted worksheets using pictures and symbols ensured that these students made good progress in recording their work. Students follow a good curriculum with a suitable focus on developing their independent living skills and good opportunities for work experience. However, as the school recognises in its development planning, students need more opportunities to gain nationally recognised accreditation. Students are very well prepared for the transition to life after school. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Around three quarters of all parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all views expressed were positive or very positive. Parents praised the staff and the quality of care which their children received. Typical comments were that 'Mountjoy is a lovely school and my son is very happy there' and 'Don't know what we would do without it. Our son is learning great life skills'. A few parents were worried about provision for particular groups of pupils, such as those with ASD or profound and multiple learning difficulties. However, the inspector looked particularly at this issue and found that all groups of pupils are achieving equally well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mountjoy School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 39 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	67	9	30	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	63	10	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	73	7	23	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	63	8	27	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	70	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	67	8	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	57	12	40	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	47	14	47	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	67	9	30	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	53	13	43	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	63	10	33	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	67	9	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	73	7	23	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



31 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mountjoy School, Flood Lane, Bridport DT6 3QG

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I inspected your school. I really enjoyed finding out about the things you are doing and talking to you. It was very useful to know what you think about your school.

I think that your school is outstanding.

There are many things that are outstanding in your school so I am just going to mention a few.

- The excellent care, support and guidance you are given so that you feel extremely safe and are really involved in making decisions about your future.
- The excellent range of activities your teachers provide you with.
- The outstanding way in which the school helps those of you who struggle to manage your behaviour and behave much better.
- The exceptionally good way in which the school is planning and preparing for the move to the new school.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher.

I have asked your teachers to do a few things to make the school even better. These are:

- to arrange for teachers to look at each other's lessons so that they can share good ideas
- to make sure that activities in lessons are just the right length and the right pace to keep you interested.

I hope you carry on enjoying what you are doing and help the teachers by trying hard in lessons, helping others and doing all you can to make the move to Beaminster School go well.

Yours sincerely

Christine Emerson

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.