

The New School

The Avenue, Exminster, Exeter, Devon EX6 8AT

Inspection dates

7–9 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher who is fully supported by her team of senior leaders, including the early years leaders. They have vision, ambition and enthusiasm and provide exemplary role models for the children in the school.
- Senior leaders' consistent drive to provide a rich and stimulating curriculum and to sustain high-quality teaching enables pupils to thrive and make great strides in their learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning consistently and plan next steps very carefully so that all pupils are challenged at an appropriate level, make consistently good progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- Children in the early years make excellent progress in their learning and personal development. They are safe, extremely well looked after and nurtured by highly committed staff.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. There is no disruption or lack of focus in lessons. Pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn. They are inquisitive and share their curiosity and eagerness to learn with staff who fully support them in their learning at all times.
- Regular personal, social and health education lessons contribute well to pupils' increasing spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They celebrate special cultural days. This helps them understand and accept others. Pupils feel that they would benefit from even greater exposure to different views and opinions.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciate the hard work and commitment of the headteacher and her staff to their children's well-being and next steps.
- The headteacher has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met, including the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage.

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?

- Further expand and develop pupils' ideas, their appreciation of different world views and understanding of other faiths and cultures.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The school is exceptionally well led and managed by the headteacher. She is fully supported by her team of senior leaders, including those responsible for the Reception and Nursery classes. There is a warm and convivial atmosphere which ensures that pupils feel happy and secure in the school and are inspired to learn.
- The headteacher has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Senior leaders excel in their planning and commitment to ambitious expectations for the personal development and academic achievement of pupils, including children in the early years.
- School leaders regularly monitor teaching and review teachers' performance to set targets. Teachers consistently discuss their planning to ensure that learning is outstanding. Teaching assistants are used effectively to help pupils in their learning and they contribute extremely well to the progress that pupils make.
- The curriculum is extremely well planned and inspires pupils to learn. It is imaginative in its use of cross-curricular themes to make relevant links between subjects. There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy for Years 1 and 2, reinforced through a wide range of topics in science, humanities and creative arts. Pupils' development in reading is a strong focus of the school and a strength.
- The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and development for the early years in the Reception and Nursery classes. Pupils' particular interests and aptitudes are recognised at an early stage and used to develop a programme of interesting and engaging activities to personalise their learning.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' learning and enjoyment. Activities contribute to and build pupils' self-confidence as they take part, challenge themselves and succeed in a range of new skills.
- The curriculum includes detailed planning for personal, social and health education. Teaching consistently promotes British values of respect and tolerance for all and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- The school's assessment procedures are rigorous. The progress of all pupils, including those who have any special educational needs, is checked closely and regularly to identify any pupils who have difficulties. This is followed up with high-quality support by the class teacher or teaching assistant.
- The welfare and behaviour of pupils remain a priority of the school. Regular staff meetings ensure that any pupil concerns are raised so that staff can provide appropriate support. Relationships between staff and between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils know that they have the support and care of their teachers.
- The school promotes equality and diversity in all aspects of its work and ensures that pupils understand and are learning tolerance and acceptance of others.
- Parents and carers have regular contact with staff to discuss any concerns and to receive annual reports on the progress of their children.

- Parents state unanimously, in discussion and in questionnaires, their appreciation of staff's support for their children and would wholeheartedly recommend the school to others.
- Staff questionnaires show unanimously that all staff enjoy working at the school, feel well supported and have appropriate training opportunities.

Governance

- The responsibility for governance of the school rests with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher. She fully understands her duty of care and responsibility to staff, parents and pupils.
- As proprietor of the school, the headteacher supports all aspects of the school's work exceptionally well. The safety, personal development and academic achievement of the pupils and children are at the centre of her work.
- Self-evaluation of the school is secure. Areas to develop or strengthen are identified and strategies are put in place to bring about improvements in the provision, in the development of teaching and learning, and in the buildings.
- As proprietor, the headteacher ensures that the school consistently promotes respect, tolerance and the personal development of the pupils. This ensures that the early stages of their education are preparing them well for the next steps in their education and for life in modern Britain and the world at large.
- The proprietor ensures that the high quality of teaching is maintained and that teaching staff are well supported in their work. As a result, pupils make exceptional progress in their learning, and in their personal and social development.
- Highly efficient management of financial resources maintains and develops the high quality of provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy with information for staff and parents which meets statutory requirements. The policy is published on the school's website and is available to parents in hard copy on request.
- The designated safeguarding lead is trained to the appropriate level. All staff are trained appropriately and are kept up to date and informed of the latest guidance and requirements in all aspects of safeguarding. Consequently, the school has a strong culture of safety and of safeguarding pupils. Leaders and staff are highly aware of their responsibility to safeguard pupils. Staff know the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns raised by a pupil or a member of staff.
- Effective, age-appropriate e-safety procedures on how to keep safe from the influence of extreme and radical views are taught well through the curriculum.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers plan very effectively and collaboratively so that lessons are imaginative and provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to engage actively in their learning and achieve well. Pupils are exceptionally eager to learn and to do their best.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations of behaviour and achievement so that pupils know what is expected and settle well in lessons to enjoy their learning. As a result, they are focused, expect to learn and encourage each other to learn. No one is allowed to disrupt and pupils help each other to behave well. The early morning one-to-one reading, catch-up and target sessions ensure that pupils have a solid start to each day reinforcing previous learning.
- When appropriate, pupils are expected to anticipate the next steps in their learning. Teaching encourages pupils to ask questions and extend their learning, to anticipate the meaning of new vocabulary, or to extend their mathematical reasoning by looking at a problem in a different way.
- From Nursery to Year 2, teaching enables pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills securely. Teachers introduce subject content progressively and build on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. Teachers watch carefully in lessons, identify and support any pupil who is falling behind, and enable all pupils to learn and make good progress.
- Teaching ensures that pupils have plentiful opportunities to develop their social, physical and creative skills. They are consistently challenged to think for themselves and to express their ideas. They are not afraid to make a mistake or to try again.
- Teachers know the pupils exceptionally well and through careful monitoring and assessment of their work, they ensure that all pupils know what they need to learn next and how to improve in their work. At the end of teaching sessions, they regularly provide pupils with opportunities to demonstrate how well they have achieved.
- Planning for next steps is developed carefully from previous sessions. Small-group or individual support ensures that pupils build confidence in their learning and in their knowledge. Teachers plan extremely well so that teaching assistants are used very effectively to support pupils' learning.
- Teaching provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips to extend pupils' learning. As a result, pupils love to learn. They are curious, and keen to know how well they are achieving and how to improve.
- Teachers challenge any stereotyping and help pupils to develop their understanding and tolerance. Teaching reflects and celebrates the diversity of pupils' experiences. Teaching provides pupils with an increasing understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experience. There is scope for even greater development of this aspect of pupils' learning.
- Parents are provided with clear and regular information about how well their children are progressing in relation to the standards expected. Parents are given clear guidance about how to support their children to improve.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are increasingly confident, self-assured learners. They develop excellent attitudes to learning, and are proud of their achievements and of their school. They appreciate that they are extremely well supported and encouraged by their teachers.
- Pupils starting school quickly absorb the positive school ethos for learning, and respect for all, with a great sense of enjoyment and pleasure in being part of the school family.
- Pupils value their learning and they rarely miss a day at school. They understand the importance of learning and want to achieve. Pupils' learning is enhanced by spontaneous discussions, for example, about what they want to do when they grow up. In assemblies, they learn to be respectful and tolerant British citizens.
- Pupils work well together, learn to share, take turns and support each other. They display exemplary conduct which reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour. Incidents of disruption or disagreement are extremely rare.
- Bullying is rare. One or two pupils talked of previous experiences and were well supported by pupils in their class to ensure that they would be safe in this school. Staff deal very effectively with any misunderstandings and provide unwavering support for all pupils.
- The school's open culture actively promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Pupils are safe and feel safe at all times. They are learning well how to keep themselves and others safe. They trust their teachers to take appropriate action to resolve any concerns they have.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development equips them to become thoughtful, caring and active citizens in school and in wider society.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Across the school, pupils demonstrate kindness, tolerance and consideration towards each other, learning to share and taking turns well.
- Pupils are curious, eager to learn and excited in their approach to learning when working independently, in groups or as a whole class.
- There is little disruption in lessons and the happy and harmonious atmosphere is highly conducive to learning. Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils demonstrate understanding of equality and diversity and are very willing to accept others. They have a clear understanding of the British values of respect and tolerance, as observed in the whole-school assembly.
- Pupils enjoy school and are highly positive about all it has to offer. Attendance levels are high.
- Pupils look after each other exceptionally well. For example, at the end of assembly, Year 2 pupils helped Nursery children to go back to their classroom.
- In discussion, pupils report that they would not want to miss a day of school and this was wholeheartedly confirmed by parents.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Most children join the school with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age.
- In Nursery, children develop excellent pre-learning skills through play and adult-led activities. Topics covered are often those of interest to the children and as a result they participate eagerly and make excellent progress in their learning.
- From Reception onwards, the strong focus on phonics and number work, linked to the wide range of topics covered, ensures pupils' high rates of progress in literacy and numeracy. Pupils learn quickly to reflect upon and review their work in order to improve their learning.
- In mathematics, pupils make rapid progress from their various starting points to increase their mathematical understanding and number work. For example, in Year 2, pupils were working to understand addition by doubling and adding or subtracting numbers. Pupils demonstrate a keen ability to work together and to help each other to understand and complete tasks.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in literacy. They read every day to an adult in the school. By Year 1, many read fluently with excellent comprehension. They are able to discuss characters and the story and guess the meanings of words from their context. Pupils write increasingly well throughout Years 1 and 2 using their phonic knowledge extremely well. They extend their range of vocabulary through discussions as a class and in group work.
- Through the wide range of subjects they cover across the curriculum, pupils' language and mathematical understanding are reinforced. They use new mathematical ideas and vocabulary in a variety of ways with ease and confidence. Pupils question confidently and express their ideas and views intelligently. They are articulate and listen to each other attentively. In discussion, pupils said that they enjoy visiting speakers and the nurse who comes to talk to them regularly and would like more speakers to come to the school.
- Any pupils who have special educational needs have one-to-one or small-group support. Their self-confidence and self-esteem in learning are encouraged so that they continue to make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Those who are most able are challenged through well-planned work in numeracy, and opportunities to extend their writing and reading. The most able pupils choose their own books and read fluently with enthusiasm.
- Results at the end of key stage 1 show that the majority of pupils achieve well above expected levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy and exceed expectations in reading and writing against national levels. Pupils' written work demonstrates excellent, imaginative writing with a strong focus on handwriting and presentation skills.
- Scrutiny of a selection of pupils' work demonstrates outstanding progress across all subjects and year groups.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- All of the independent school standards are met for the early years setting.
- Leaders and managers excel in their uncompromising drive to set ambitious targets and to maintain the highest levels of outcomes for all children.
- Regular evaluation and supervision of staff practice ensure that standards in teaching and assessment are rigorous and maintained to a high standard.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding is effective and that staff are trained and kept up to date with the latest guidance. Children's health, safety and well-being are at the forefront of leaders' planning through the consistent implementation of robust policies and procedures.
- The learning environment is colourful and highly stimulating. The curriculum is innovative, exceptionally well planned by leaders, and provides rich, varied and imaginative experiences. When they arrive each morning, children settle immediately to play, work together and enjoy their learning.
- Teaching is carefully planned, consistently of a very high quality and responsive to children's needs and interests. There is excellent provision for the teaching of phonics.
- Activities reinforce children's literacy and numeracy skills and build on their previous knowledge. For example, children in Reception were learning about the growth of plants. This linked well with their learning of phonic sounds for words such as 'soil' and 'poison'.
- Assessment is accurate and based on high-quality observations. It includes all those involved in the child's learning and development. Provision across all areas of learning is planned meticulously. Planning is based on rigorous and sharply focused assessments of children's achievement so that every child undertakes highly challenging activities.
- Children are highly motivated and very eager to join in. They consistently demonstrate curiosity, imagination and concentration. They are highly responsive to adults and each other. They do not distract others or become distracted easily. Children encourage each other to focus well and learn.
- Children are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and to manage risks. They demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour and high levels of self-control and respect for others.
- Children enjoy learning and are able to play well together, or alongside each other, with confidence. There is rarely any disruption to play or learning, and children focus extremely well when listening to a story. They are able to ask questions, articulate ideas and anticipate what may happen next in the story.
- Parents have regular contact with staff and leaders to ensure that they are kept up to date with the progress and personal development of their children. Liaison with parents is excellent. Parents are highly appreciative of the school's work with their children.
- Children make consistently high rates of progress in relation to their starting points and are extremely well prepared academically, socially and emotionally for the next stage of their education. All children, including those who have special educational needs, and the most able, are making substantial and sustained progress.

School details

Unique reference number	113624
DfE registration number	878/6046
Inspection number	10020712

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	Day school
School category	Independent
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Number of part-time pupils	16
Proprietor	Michelle Taylor
Headteacher	Michelle Taylor
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,077
Telephone number	01392 496122
Website	www.thenewschoolexeter.co.uk
Email address	office@thenewschoolexeter.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 June 2011

Information about this school

- The New School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between three and seven years of age.
- It opened in September 1992 and is situated in Exminster on the outskirts of Exeter in Devon. Admission is non-selective. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 56 pupils on roll, 18 of whom are in the early years foundation stage.
- The school's aim is to provide 'a solid grounding in the key skills without losing sight of the child-centred creative aspect of an infant environment'.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

- The school is owned and governed by the headteacher, who is the proprietor.
- The website provides all the required information for parents and prospective parents.
- The school was last inspected in June 2011, when all of the independent school standards were met except for the provision of appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, and access to the school such that it allows all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to enter and leave the school in safety. Both have been suitably rectified and are now compliant.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in different subjects. Meetings were held with the proprietor/headteacher, senior leaders, teaching staff and parents.
- The inspector examined a number of school documents to check compliance with the independent school standards. These included the school's website, policies, information about pupils' progress and the school's evaluation of its own work.
- Records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding were scrutinised.
- There were 23 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and parents' comments were taken into account.
- The inspector took account of 12 staff questionnaire responses and had discussions with pupils, including children in the early years.

Inspection team

Flora Bean, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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