



MOUNTJOY SCHOOL



C O N T E N T S

3. Introduction and Structure
Welcome to Mountjoy School
4. School Aims
5. Acorns
6. Willow Elm and Maple
7. Ash
8. Oak Sixth Form
9. Cedar and Juniper
10. Inclusion
11. Daily Routines
12. Admissions
13. Multi Agency Approach
14. Therapy
15. RE and Assemblies
16. Parental Engagement
17. Pupil Well Being and Behaviour
18. The Governing Body
19. Important Information
20. Valuables and Absence
21. Emergency Closure
22. Medical matters and Safeguarding
23. Complaints Comments and Compliments
24. How to contact us



INTRODUCTION AND STRUCTURE

Mountjoy is a small, community special school in rural West Dorset. The school is co-located on the site of Beaminster Secondary School which allows for opportunities to work closely together for the benefit of all.

Our aim is to treat every pupil as an individual and help each pupil to find their own identity and work in the world.

We work well in partnership with families and agencies to ensure our pupils learn and develop to the best of their ability and all stakeholders feel supported.

The school is fortunate to have its own hydrotherapy pool, soft play room and sensory room.

We are a small, day, special school for children and young people between the ages of 2.5 years and 19 years.

The school is structured into seven classes; class groups are organised by learning needs, age and stage of development. As pupils' needs may change during the course of a school year, they may transfer to a different class.

Any transfers within school will always be carefully planned and be fully discussed and agreed with parents and carers.

WELCOME TO MOUNTJOY SCHOOL

Thank you for taking an interest in our school. All staff and volunteers work hard and are truly dedicated to Mountjoy School; we work to improve the learning and life chances of the children and young people here.

As a community school, we see our role as one of friendship and support for the members of the local and wider community. We engage with partnership work at every level and always hold the child central to all decisions.

Though the prospectus contains much useful and important information about Mountjoy School, you will not be able to gain a proper understanding of our school without first coming to meet us. If you are not familiar with Mountjoy School, please contact the school to arrange a visit. You will of course, be most welcome. We will be very proud to introduce you to the pupils and staff when you visit our facilities, whilst allowing you to gain a good insight into the ethos of our wonderful school.



SCHOOL AIMS

- Create a happy, safe and secure learning environment, rich in stimulation and challenge for all pupils
- Provide our pupils with a variety of quality educational experiences in all aspects of life
- Enable pupils to develop effective communication skills, in order to express thoughts, feelings and choices
- Provide a safe and happy environment in which pupils can work towards achieving their best
- Develop the moral, cultural and spiritual awareness of all pupils
- Ensure that all pupils enjoy their learning and have fun
- Ensure all members of the school community grow in confidence, and develop to their full potential
- Offer a school curriculum that is well researched, broad, balanced, is based on the National Curriculum and is appropriately adapted to meet the needs of all pupils
- Provide personalised learning opportunities ensuring all pupils are supported to make as much progress as possible
- Provide pupils with an education appropriate to the world beyond the classroom, ensuring that pupils develop life skills, learn, when appropriate, in real life settings, and have opportunities to be a valued member of a variety of communities
- Welcome and develop partnerships with parents, carers and a range of professional and lay people with whom we can share advice and develop best practice
- Develop pupils emotional literacy skills, enabling them to have the opportunity to make positive relationships, reflect and appreciate themselves and others





ACORNS

Acorns provide the first step to learning at Mountjoy School.

The youngest children build confidence and skills in their first days at school in the Nursery.

As they build in confidence, and have begun to build relationships with key adults, they can explore the big play room and outside spaces, to extend their learning experiences.

We would encourage parents/carers to stay with their children for the first few sessions to help their child settle in to school.

Children can begin at Mountjoy School when they are 2.5 years.

Children aged between 2.5 and 6 years will play and explore within the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

This gives them a fun, practical, play-based, experiential and creative way to begin their learning journeys.

Within the Early Years, we work with professionals (Portage, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapist, etc) to build individual programmes into a tailored curriculum experience.

Children in the Foundation Stage will develop a 'Learning Journey' throughout their time.

Each 'Learning Journey' will provide a chronology of photographs, pieces of work and observations which demonstrate a child's progress over time.

As children move into Key Stage 1, teachers begin to assess using P Levels. Pupils' progress will be evidenced regularly throughout the year to show and celebrate learning.

We recognise that all of our pupils learn in different ways and at different rates.

We celebrate the small steps of progress our pupils make.

We use star charts, Head Teacher certificates and tangible rewards to show to our pupils that we are proud of their achievements, and strive to ensure that these are accessible and meaningful for every individual.





WILLOW

Pupils in Willow Class are aged approximately between 7 to 11 years.

They follow the National Curriculum for Key Stage 2.

There continues to be a focus on sensory and physical learning, where this is appropriate. Daily therapy programmes and activities are carried out throughout the day, which are built into the curriculum.

ELM

Elm Class has been newly set up to accommodate key stage 2 & 3 pupils who we feel will benefit from a small nurture like environment based around good attachment principles. Currently there are 5 pupils who benefit from either national or MSI curriculum.



MAPLE

Teachers continue to use B squared and age expected progress measures.

These are reported on three times a year for core subjects. All National Curriculum subject areas are reported on during the end of year assessments.

Key Stage 3 pupils have use of the specialist facilities within Beaminster School.



ASH

Students in Ash are mainly within Key Stage 4. There is a strong focus on functional skills, employability and independent living.

We hold inclusion as a high priority for students in Ash; whilst some will have inclusion with peers within the school, others have inclusion within the main-stream school on the shared campus.



This comprises a range of subjects, including English, Math's, Science, PE and Drama, amongst others.





OAK CLASS SIXTH FORM

Oak Class focuses on skills for life and independent living.

Students in Oak continue to follow a broad curriculum, but this is much more focused on a skills based approach; for example, pupils will learn how to plan and prepare a meal, use time effectively to plan their day and learn how to use public transport, wherever possible.

There will continue to be a sensory and physical approach to learning for all pupils, where this is still appropriate.

Students will have opportunities to explore work-related learning activities and will engage in vocational activities wherever possible.

Accredited courses include OCR Life & Living Skills, a range of Asdan awards, and qualifications for the John Muir awards and the Duke of Edinburgh awards

Pupils are assessed using adult steps.





CEDAR

Pupils in Cedar Class have a very personalised curriculum. Whilst they continue to follow the subjects in the National Curriculum appropriate to their age, there is an emphasis on physical and sensory learning. Many students follow a MSI (Multi-Sensory Integration) Curriculum within Cedar, which ensures their learning experiences are targeted, functional and meaningful to the individual.

Pupils in Cedar will be given the structure and systems to enable them to access all learning opportunities.

Students in Cedar are all assessed using P Levels and National Curriculum Levels, alongside other tools which both measure and celebrate progress including the MSI assessment, and external accreditation for students in Key Stage 5.



JUNIPER

Pupils in Juniper Class focus on MSI Curriculum, following on from the Early Years Curriculum.

They begin to follow all of the subjects in the National Curriculum appropriate to their age, with an emphasis on functional learning.

Pupils in Juniper Class will be given the structure and systems to enable them to access all learning opportunities.

Pupils are all assessed using P Levels, alongside other tools which measure progress.





INCLUSION

All inclusion opportunities are planned with individual needs and interests at the heart. Most of the inclusion work we take part in is planned into the daily curriculum.

There are occasions when pupils may go on inclusion placements to another school to enrich their learning. This placement may take a more formal route and will be discussed at the pupil's Annual Review.



We have some pupils who are dual-registered with us and a mainstream school. For these pupils, the collaborative decision has been made that the needs of the individual can be best met by combining special and mainstream experiences to maximise learning and opportunity.





DAILY ROUTINES

The school day at Mountjoy begins at 8.55 am and finishes at 3.30 pm.

The majority of our pupils are brought to school on organised transport, and some pupils are brought by their parents.

Transitions into Mountjoy are carefully considered and personalised to ensure this is successful.

All pupils have a mid-morning break, which includes a healthy snack brought in from home.

Pupils will have the opportunity to go out in the play areas; in cold and/or wet weather activities will be set up indoors.

A cooked lunch is available to buy each day, which is freshly made in school. Pupils who are entitled to a free school meal will be given details of how to apply.





ADMISSIONS

Admissions to Mountjoy School are agreed through the Local Authority for the county in which a young person lives, i.e. Dorset, Devon, Somerset, etc. The wishes of parents and child play an important part in the admissions process into Mountjoy School.

There will need to be Local Authority agreement before any pupil begins their time at Mountjoy School, usually with advice from other professionals.

Pupils at Mountjoy School have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan. These are reviewed annually.

We believe that the pupil should be at the heart of the Annual Review and, therefore, they follow a person-centred review process.

Parents/carers and pupils are expected to visit Mountjoy before a placement can be agreed.





MULTI AGENCY APPROACH

Staff at Mountjoy School work very closely with a wide range of agencies to meet the holistic needs of all pupils. These agencies may include:

- Health Visitors
- Paediatricians
- School Nurse
- Locality Team
- Transition and Careers Advisors
- Sensory Impairment Service
- Educational Psychologists
- Social Care

We also have regular visits, and work closely with:

- Speech and Language Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapist (particularly in Sensory Integration)
- Community Nurse

We can request other specialist advice where needed and agreed by all parties.





THERAPY



We see a pupil's therapeutic needs as a vital element to their learning, development and progress and are an integral part of the Mountjoy curriculum. We work with a range of therapists within school who assess, plan and support pupils and staff to implement individual therapy programmes.

Speech and Language Therapists work with individuals and groups.



For pupils who require sensory learning, including Sensory diets, an Occupational Therapist visits us regularly, working closely with staff and pupils to create and monitor daily programmes.

We work closely with our Physiotherapist, who visits us regularly, supporting pupils with Physiotherapy, both on land and in our hydro pool.





RE AND ASSEMBLIES

Religious Education (RE) is taught across the school. Teachers use the Dorset Agreed Syllabus as a guide to content.

RE at Mountjoy is broadly Christian in emphasis, although there is a rich exploration of other beliefs and customs around the world, which promotes respect, tolerance and understanding.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE if they wish; alternative arrangements will be made for them.



Collective worship takes place every day.

The Assemblies are used to create an atmosphere of mutual support and care, alongside opportunities for acts of worship, awe and wonder.

These opportunities often look at the learning focus for the week and promote success and celebration.



PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

We believe that pupils at Mountjoy School make the best progress in learning and development when working in partnership with parents and carers.

We encourage parents and carers to be actively involved in the educational life of their young person.

We welcome contact with parents and carers at any time and hope they feel able to contact us when ever the need arises.

Pupils have a home-school contact book in which staff and parents and carers can communicate on a regular basis.

We encourage, where appropriate, parents to work alongside the school as volunteers.



Mountjoy School our Family Liaison Officer (FLO), is the point of contact if parents and carers have a question or concern about their child or education.

Our FLO organises parent/carer coffee mornings and events, supports and advises individual families in all aspects of parenting and acts as a voice for parents and carers.

Whilst parents and carers are able to contact their child's/young person's class teacher at any time, parents and carers are formally invited into school to meet their child's class teacher twice a year, in addition to the Annual Review meeting, to discuss all aspects of learning, progress and development.





PUPIL WELL BEING

We are proud of our small, community special school and we strive to provide a warm, caring and nurturing environment where staff and pupils feel safe, comfortable and happy.

We have trained ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) at Mountjoy who work with small groups or in 1:1 situations to support pupils to develop emotional understanding and expression.



As a member of Mountjoy School we agree to:

- Be responsible for our own behaviour;
- Respect and care for each other;
- Always try our best;
- Look after our school;
- Walk in school;
- Keep ourselves and each other safe.



BEHAVIOUR

We have positive reward systems in place across the school.

These vary from class to class according to the age and stage of learning. Some pupils will also have individual reward systems in place as needed.

Our pupils are given every opportunity to learn to accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviours. Staff at Mountjoy provide consistency in their approach and work within an agreed framework to manage behaviour positively. We work closely with parents and carers when managing behaviour and will always keep parents and carers informed of serious incidents.

It is occasionally necessary to use fixed term exclusions to manage serious incidents. Staff work hard to avoid this and these are only employed as a last resort.

Incidents involving bullying are rare at Mountjoy School. However, where they do occur, staff work hard with individuals to teach them about appropriate ways to work and learn alongside their peers.



THE GOVERNING BODY

We have an experienced and active governing body at Mountjoy School; they work closely with staff and parents and carers to secure the best possible provision for all pupils at Mountjoy School.

The governing body acts as a “critical friend”; it supports the work of the school, and is responsible for raising school standards through setting strategic direction, monitoring and evaluating the school.

The governing body is made up of a combination of elected, appointed or co-opted members, including parent governors.

The governing body meets to discuss school business six times a year, with smaller committee meetings taking place before each one.

The committee meetings are focused around two specific areas: Pupil Welfare & Curriculum and Resources.





IMPORTANT INFORMATION

School Clothing

Whilst we do not have a uniform policy, we can order optional school clothing, which pupils can choose to wear.

Whether choosing school clothing or not, we expect our pupils to:

- take pride in their appearance;
- be dressed in clothes appropriate for the activities they are involved in;
- be clean and well groomed as far as possible;
- have all items of clothing clearly marked with their name;
- only wear stud earrings, if any;
- have a warm coat in the winter and wet weather clothing for outdoor activities;
- bring sun cream and a hat for the summer months.



Physical Education

Where appropriate, we expect our pupils to learn to change for PE and sport activities. Pupils will need to bring a suitable PE kit:

- black/ white plimsolls (non-marking);
- sports shorts and/or tracksuit bottoms;
- white t-shirt or polo shirt;
- one-piece swimming costume or trunks (boys);
- towel for swimming.

You will need to provide incontinence swimwear if your child/young person needs it.





VALUABLES

Pupils are advised, wherever possible, not to bring valuable items on to the school premises. The school cannot be liable for the loss or damage of valuable items.

An exception to this is where an item is used for learning or communication and this has been agreed with the school beforehand.

Pupils should not have mobile phones with them during the school day.



ABSENCE

If a pupil is absent from school, it is essential we know why.

Parents are requested to contact the school by telephone or letter on the first day of absence (preferably by 8.30 am on the day of absence).

Schools have a legal responsibility to record all pupils' absences.

It is important that family holidays are planned during the school holidays.

Holidays during term time can only be agreed in exceptional circumstances.





EMERGENCY CLOSURE

On occasion, it may be necessary to close the school at very short notice. Generally, this is as a result of very poor road conditions, e.g. heavy snow.

On the rare occasion this decision is taken, a message will be put on the school's main telephone number, the school website, Facebook, and the 'school closure' section of Dorset For You will display this information.

If a closure is needed urgently during the school day, parents and carers will be contacted via emergency telephone numbers before children are allowed to return home.





MEDICAL MATTERS & SAFEGUARDING

When new pupils are admitted to Mountjoy School, a medical questionnaire needs to be completed. We may ask for this to be updated from time to time. It is important that parents and carers update the school if there are any medical changes.

The Consultant Paediatrician from Dorset County Hospital holds regular clinics at Mountjoy School. It is very important that parents and carers attend these clinic appointments with their child/young person.

Any medicines needed during the school day will require a Parental Agreement for Medicine Administration form to be completed and signed. Staff will not be able to administer any medication if this is not completed. All medication to be administered should be in a named package with the dosage clearly written on it.



SAFEGUARDING

At Mountjoy School, keeping children and young people safe is our highest priority.

We work very closely with a number of agencies who are available for advice and guidance on all matters.

Copies of our Safeguarding Policies are available from the school office on request.





COMPLAINTS COMMENTS & COMPLIMENTS

Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss any concerns which they may have with their child's class teacher or our FLO (Family Liaison Officer), in the first instance. This will resolve the vast majority of issues.

If a parent or carer feels that their particular concern is, or has become, more serious, it should be discussed with the Deputy Head Teacher or the Head Teacher. Please telephone the main school number to make an appointment.

We will always attempt to resolve difficulties through listening to concerns and working in partnership to find an agreeable resolution.



If, for any reason, a parent would like a copy of the Complaints Policy, please ask at the school office.

Whether we've got something right, or could have done something better, we would like to hear what you think.



HOW TO CONTACT US

Mountjoy School

Tunnel Road

Beaminster

Dorset

DT8 3HB

Telephone: 01308 861155

Email: office@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk

Website: <http://mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk/>

Facebook.com/Mountjoy School

