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## **New building rises from the ashes to help change children's lives**

A specialist free school praised by Ofsted for changing children's lives is celebrating the opening of a new multi-million pound facility.

Eaglewood School in New Milton has unveiled its new Phoenix and Nightingale buildings, enabling it to increase pupil numbers from 30 to 50.

The school was launched in 2016 to provide desperately needed alternative provision for young people throughout the New Forest and east Dorset who find it difficult to cope in mainstream education.

It took over a redundant site (previously the Phoenix Youth Centre), which thanks to government funding, has been completely re-designed to include new state-of-the-art classrooms, gym, playground facilities, advanced ICT and food technology suites as well as a fitted kitchen, laundry and shower rooms.

This good news follows hot-on-the-heels of a glowing Ofsted report which hailed the school for significantly helping to improve young people's lives and getting many pupils back into mainstream education.

Headteacher, Nigel Himmel, said: "This academic year has seen Eaglewood start in its strongest position since we were formed.

"Our new building gives us the space and facilities we so desperately needed as well as allowing us to increase capacity, allowing us to help even more of the most vulnerable students in our community.

"We've also had our first, and very successful Ofsted inspection, which rated us Good in all four areas and praised the care we provide our pupils and their families.

"The inspectors made special mention of our dedicated staff who are making significant improvements to children's lives.

"This is something we are not only very proud of but also runs through everything we do at Eaglewood School."

Since opening, Eaglewood has successfully reintegrated 40% of its students into mainstream education, helped 30% into more specialist provision and found post 16 provision for a further 25%.

The school's attendance rate is also over 80%, nearly 25% higher than the national average for alternative provision providers.

One parent, when describing the positive impact of the school's work on their child and family, told Ofsted: "They have changed our lives."

The Ofsted inspectors also praised the school for good teaching that enables pupils to progress in their social and emotional development, passionate leaders who place pupils' needs at the centre of all that happens at school and a curriculum that matches the needs of the children.

Now the school has the facilities to match the excellent teaching.

Nigel added: "The youth centre that was once here was closed due to public funding cuts and remained empty before we arrived.

“It’s wonderful that the site has been resurrected and will still be used to support the area’s young people.

“That’s why we kept the name Phoenix, as the building has risen again from the ashes.”

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**Note to editors:** For more information please contact Rachel Read, account director at Deep South Media, on 01202 534487.