

# Inspection of a good school: Island Learning Centre

Albany Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5HZ

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are positive about attending the Island Learning Centre. They like the small class sizes, which help to maintain a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils welcome the support from staff and usually respond well to them. They appreciate how staff listen to them and nurture their potential. One pupil commented, 'The staff know me and know what I need.' This helps pupils to feel settled and safe.

The school is keen for pupils, who all have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to do well. However, these ambitions are not fully realised in practice. As a result, pupils sometimes achieve well but this is not consistent across different subjects or year groups.

Some pupils find it challenging to manage their behaviour but, overall, it is improving. Leaders have increased their expectations of pupils to be ready, respectful and resilient. Many pupils respond positively but some pupils find meeting these expectations difficult.

The school helps pupils to successfully engage in education. Consequently, they are motivated and persevere to successfully overcome different challenges. Pupils are supported to make positive changes to their attitudes and learning and they go on to successfully achieve different qualifications. Pupils also study important lessons for life, including how to keep themselves safe in the community and recognise healthy relationships.

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

The Island Learning Centre is an inclusive school. It supports pupils who have often missed periods of learning to successfully return to education. The interim headteacher has empowered staff to begin to address weaknesses in the school. Staff appreciate the

training and guidance which enables them to focus on supporting pupils. The school treats pupils as individuals from the start. Staff work closely with parents to prioritise identifying pupils' needs and use this information well to provide bespoke support. They routinely review what provision is working well and adapt accordingly. The school works effectively with a range of external agencies to provide the support that pupils need. Staff strive to raise pupils' aspirations. One staff member commented, 'We focus on where our pupils will finish, not where they start.'

The school has established a coherent curriculum, which contains the important content that pupils are expected to learn. However, there is variability in how well it is implemented. For example in mathematics, staff have high expectations, use secure subject knowledge to recap previous learning and accurately check pupils' understanding. This is not yet as secure across every subject, so pupils do not achieve consistently well. In addition, the school does not maintain a sufficiently sharp focus on supporting struggling readers. As a result, these pupils do not gain the knowledge and skills they need to read with fluency and confidence.

The school has established clear expectations for pupils' conduct. Staff welcome effective support from the school to help them positively manage pupils' behaviour. This has created an orderly environment, where pupils usually follow routines well and has reduced incidents of disruptive behaviour. On occasion, some pupils' less positive actions still interrupt learning.

Pupils' attendance has improved considerably but remains too low. The school has introduced 'ready to learn' sessions each morning, which motivate pupils and encourage prompt attendance. However, too many pupils miss learning through absence or because they are on part-time timetables. New leaders are working to address this, so that more pupils swiftly receive a full-time education when they join the school.

The school prioritises developing pupils' engagement and resilience. This supports pupils to make the most of the varied opportunities at the Island Learning Centre. They learn about different careers and pupils access independent careers advice and guidance. This helps them to be well prepared for their next steps in future education and employment. Staff provide interesting opportunities, such as working with artists, cooking and forestry work, which inspire pupils as they consider future careers.

The reformed management committee work effectively in partnership with school leaders. They have sharply focused on urgently improving important aspects of the school. Their understanding of how well pupils achieve is not yet sufficiently developed.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

**(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum is inconsistently implemented. This means that pupils' learning is variable across different subjects. The school should ensure that staff emphasise the most important content, check pupils' understanding and help pupils to remember long term the knowledge and skills they have been taught.
- The support for weaker readers is underdeveloped. This means that struggling readers are not swiftly learning to read with fluency. The school should ensure they strengthen the additional support for pupils at an early stage of learning to read and ensure that they have suitable books to read to help them develop confidence and accuracy.
- The management of behaviour is not yet fully consistent. This means that, on occasion, some pupils' behaviour disrupts learning. The school should ensure that all staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave and then closely follow the agreed behaviour procedures.
- Some pupils' attendance is too low. This means that they are missing important learning, which reduces their opportunities for future education and employment. The school should ensure that they continue to work with parents to increase attendance for all pupils.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2018.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133744
<b>Local authority</b>	Isle of Wight
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269003
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Toner
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.Islandlearning.co.uk">www.Islandlearning.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school provides an education for pupils with social, emotional or mental health difficulties. All pupils have SEND and a quarter of pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many pupils have been permanently excluded from their mainstream school. The school also caters for pupils who are medically unwell.
- The interim headteacher started her role in June 2023 and the deputy headteacher began her role in January 2023.
- The chair of the management committee started his position in May 2023.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative providers.
- The school closed its provision for primary pupils in July 2023.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, as well as teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the members of the management committee, including the chair. She also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, and life skills (personal, social and health education and religious education). For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of parents, leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff and pupils were also considered through Ofsted's surveys.

## Inspection team

Laurie Anderson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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