

Inspection of Releasing Potential School

7 Kingscroft Court, Ridgway, Havant PO9 1LS

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 September 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	Good
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	Good
----------------------	-------------

Leadership and management	Good
---------------------------	-------------

Sixth-form provision	Good
----------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
--	----------------------

Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
--	------------

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a highly inclusive school, where all pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Most pupils have experienced a disrupted education or low school attendance prior to joining the school. The school has established a carefully planned transition process. This supports pupils to settle successfully into the 'releasing potential' approach. Pupils appreciate the difference that the school makes to their lives. They talk about flourishing in this unique environment.

Relationships between staff and pupils are a key strength of the school. Adults use these positive relationships to build trust and to help pupils develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need for lifelong learning and future employment.

The school's core values of love, fun, survival, power and freedom underpin the school's ethos. Pupils feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe online and in the real world.

The school's carefully considered curriculum enables pupils to learn at a pace suited to individual needs and starting points. The focus on outdoor education and learning in the outside environment is pivotal to the school's success. As a result of the way the curriculum is tailored to meet needs, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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

Since the last standard inspection, the school has developed the role of the governing body. As a result, there is a clear oversight of the school's strengths and areas for development as well as how the independent school standards are met. The school adheres to schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school has recently refined some of its systems and processes to further enhance monitoring. Some of these are not fully embedded yet. Leaders have a strong shared vision for what pupils will achieve during their time at the school. They are determined to provide the best possible education for pupils.

Much of the pupils' learning takes place outdoors in a variety of ways. The curriculum is well sequenced and identifies what pupils need to achieve throughout their time in school. The school has carefully broken down targets from pupils' EHC plans. The school's SHAPE booklets help staff and pupils to understand what they need to do to achieve. Consequently, adults can quickly identify what pupils know and what they need further help with. However, sometimes staff are not clear on how to adapt learning so pupils can achieve the aims of the curriculum alongside their targets. Pupils in the post-16 provision are well supported to gain the skills and confidence needed to embark onto education or employment. The school works closely with parents and external agencies to meticulously identify which pupils will benefit from this additional time to prepare for next steps.

The school understands the importance of pupils being able to read and communicate effectively. It uses a phonics scheme to support pupils at the early stages of reading. Adults are acutely aware that some pupils find assessment activities challenging. Staff are adept at checking where pupils' gaps are in a variety of ways so that this barrier is removed. They use this information to inform next steps and provision for pupils.

Expectations for behaviour are high. The school successfully supports staff to understand the needs of pupils and how best to support them to build positive relationships. Pupils appreciate the calm environment of school and the nurturing approach that staff have. Adults are excellent role models. They ensure that everyone understands the school routines and why these are important. Pupils are further motivated by the school's reward system. They are keen to earn stars and have their achievements recognised. A number of pupils have struggled to maintain positive attendance in previous settings. The school is highly alert to this and helps pupils to develop productive habits in order to attend school more regularly.

Promoting pupils' well-being and developing self-esteem are central to the school's work. There is a cohesive personal and social development programme. This helps pupils to build resilience, determination and independence. The school is keen to broaden pupils' horizons through trips, activities and visitors. This includes ensuring that pupils are equipped to identify possible next steps and careers. Pupils have the opportunity to learn the basics of different trades on site, including brick laying and mechanics. Whereas students in the post-16 provision are able to gain valuable work experience in the printshop while completing an employability qualification. The school also helps pupils to gain qualifications through their work in the outdoors. Pupils are enthusiastic about their achievements, such as completing the Duke of Edinburgh's award and taking part in the school's cookery competitions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some lessons, staff do not always consider how pupils' EHC plan targets can be met alongside the curriculum objectives. This means that pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills needed to adapt learning to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Some school systems have recently been refined. These are not yet fully embedded. Staff do not always have a robust understanding of how to implement the agreed processes. The school should support staff to implement newer routines effectively and in line with expectations.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	144808
DfE registration number	850/6093
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10375007
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Releasing Potential Ltd
Chair	Paul Jenkins
Headteacher	Olly Parker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,970
Telephone number	02392 479762
Website	www.releasingpotential.com/school
Email address	admin@releasingpotential.com
Date of previous inspection	28 to 30 November 2023

Information about this school

- Releasing Potential School is owned and operated by Releasing Potential Limited, a charitable organisation, which also incorporates an outdoor education division that operates separately to the school. Collectively, the school and outdoor education division provide education and outreach support for children and young people, particularly those who find traditional classroom-based education challenging.
- Releasing Potential Ltd has a board of trustees, which acts as the proprietor body for the school. There is also a governing body, which has clearly defined responsibilities for oversight of standards in the school.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan, with social, emotional and mental health identified as their primary need. They are referred to the school by Hampshire or West Sussex local authorities, who fund their placements.
- The school operates from two sites: Unit 7, Kingscroft Court, Ridgway, Havant PO9 1LS and 4 St James' Works, St Pancras, Chichester PO19 7NN.
- As part of their educational package, pupils spend some of their time on site at one or more of the outreach satellite centres run by Releasing Potential Ltd's outdoor education division: Willow Farm, Emsworth Outdoors and Sailing Centre, Northney. They are accompanied throughout by staff from Releasing Potential School. Pupils do not access other alternative provision beyond the satellite sites that exist as part of the wider Releasing Potential organisation.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place in November 2023. Since then, it has submitted two action plans to the Department of Education (DfE) and has had two progress monitoring inspections. The last progress monitoring inspection took place in February 2025, where all of the previously unmet standards were judged to be met.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the head of education and chief executive officer. The lead inspector held a meeting with representatives of the governing body, including the chair and the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in English, personal social development and outdoor education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of 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.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys, including Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors toured the school site to gather evidence about compliance with the standards. Inspectors also reviewed a range of other documents and policies, including on the school's website.

Inspection team

Sara Staggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Bevan

His Majesty's Inspector

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025