

# Inspection of Fairlight Glen Independent Special School

Verona House, 45 Station Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 5QQ

---

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 July 2023

---

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils who attend Fairlight Glen have often experienced disruption to their lives and education. Most have had negative experiences of school. They join this school thinking that it will be the same here as it was in other schools. However, this is far from what they find. Pupils invest in this school because they feel safe, well cared for and valued. Pupils' needs are well understood, and staff get to know pupils really well. Building positive relationships and trust is something that sits at the very heart of the school. When asked what the best thing is about Fairlight Glen, pupils remarked, 'It's the teachers.'

Pupils' attendance at school is good. Nearly all pupils attend regularly and on time. When they do not, staff are quick to find out why and explore ways to help. Routines at the start and end of the school day are calm and well organised. Staff strike just the right balance that keeps pupils settled and learning. Pupils behave well in class and at social times. They get on well with each other. Bullying is seldom an issue. Pupils sometimes fall out, but staff help them to resolve any issues.

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

The headteacher, proprietor and staff are committed to changing pupils' lives for the better. They are passionate about making a tangible difference. An important part of the work they do is to teach pupils how to manage their behaviour and respond to different situations. This is often something pupils struggle with when they first start at the school. Staff provide pupils with a range of strategies that they can use in their everyday lives to help them manage their thoughts and feelings.

Pupils' learning and social, emotional and mental health needs are very well understood by staff. This helps teachers to plan carefully what the curriculum will look like for each pupil. Teachers identify precisely the gaps in different areas of pupils' learning and use this knowledge to design a highly personalised curriculum. English, mathematics and personal, social and health education are all important aspects of pupils' individual programmes. Beyond this, the subjects pupils study are matched closely to their individual needs and interests.

Staff ensure that the curriculum is exciting and motivating. There is a wide range of subjects that make up pupils' personal learning programmes. For example, pupils study cooking, art, music, physical education, history, geography, British Sign Language and modern foreign languages. Some pupils use the school gym, learn to build or do some gardening. One pupil had skilfully used mathematics and design and technology to build a large, impressive wooden structure in the garden, based on a model version he had planned and constructed.

Staff have given some thought to what pupils will learn and when in each of the subjects. They are not afraid to be flexible and adaptable in response to what is going on in pupils' lives to help ensure the most effective engagement with learning at any given time. Despite this, leaders need to think more carefully about the

important knowledge and skills they want their pupils to develop in a few subjects so that pupils can learn what will be most useful to them in the future.

Staff prioritise reading. They understand its importance in helping pupils to learn the other areas of the curriculum. They work on developing pupils' phonic knowledge but do not always give them books to read that match the sounds they are learning. Staff work well with pupils to develop their understanding of what they read. Pupils read for pleasure, and there are opportunities for staff to read to pupils. The common room library has a variety of books. Pupils were reading a range of books at the time of the inspection, including the 'Harry Potter' series.

Pupils are prepared well for adulthood. Trips outside of school are frequent. Pupils regularly go to the local supermarket to develop their social and communication skills by buying ingredients for cooking. Some pupils enjoy mountain biking and climbing. The day before the inspection, pupils had visited Diggerland. Some pupils have the opportunity to complete work experience. The careers advice pupils receive helps them to consider future opportunities. Pupils typically leave the school with functional skills qualifications at a suitable level.

Staff have developed strong partnerships with parents and carers. Parents who spoke to the lead inspector and who responded to Ofsted Parent View were highly positive about the experience of their children at the school. When talking about their son, one parent said, 'He is safe, happy, supported and encouraged to be the best version of himself. My only wish is that we found him a place here sooner.'

The proprietor works closely with the headteacher to ensure that the independent school standards are met. Leaders have ensured that the school fulfils its statutory duties and that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. While leaders check the work of the school, they need to monitor and evaluate all areas, for example the curriculum, more rigorously to help them set more precise actions to move the school forward.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a top priority for leaders and staff. Staff are all trained to a high level which ensures they have suitable knowledge and expertise to respond to concerns that are of a safeguarding nature. Clear processes mean that risks are carefully managed and responded to. Absence processes also help to ensure that pupils are safe. The designated safeguarding lead is knowledgeable and well connected with other agencies. He follows up on safeguarding concerns effectively to ensure that pupils get the right support. Staff teach pupils how to stay safe. This work is seamlessly woven into the daily life of the school.

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

- Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of some aspects of the school's work, for example the curriculum, do not always inform future priorities and improvements as well as they could. Leaders and the proprietor need to ensure that their monitoring and evaluation help them to set more precise actions to improve the school further.
- While pupils receive phonics support to help fill some of the gaps they have, they do not read books that are matched closely enough to the sounds they are learning. This means that they do not get a chance to experience success as often as they could. Leaders need to further develop the phonics provision to ensure that the books pupils read match the phonics programme.
- The important content pupils learn in a very small number of subjects within their personal learning programmes is not always thought out well enough to meet pupils' individual needs. This means that pupils learn content that may not serve them well in the future. Leaders need to ensure that the content pupils learn is precisely matched to what pupils need to be prepared well for the future.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135623
<b>DfE registration number</b>	886/6132
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267646
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	6
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Pilgrims Corner Education Ltd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Cordes
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£38,584 to £50,200
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 741 113
<b>Email address</b>	education@pilgrimscorner.co.uk
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 to 29 November 2018

## Information about this school

- Fairlight Glen is an independent special school located in a residential area of Herne Bay, Kent.
- The proprietor also operates Pilgrims Corner Ltd, which provides fostering services, and owns three children's homes.
- The school, which opened in 2008, provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, alongside associated learning difficulties and autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan and nearly all pupils are looked after.
- Pupils are placed at the school by local authorities.
- The school is registered for up to 12 pupils aged between eight and 18 years. Prior to attending this school, some pupils had been out of formal education for significant periods.
- The last standard inspection of the school was in November 2018.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## 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.

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

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher and teaching and support staff at the school. The lead inspector also met with a proprietor.
- Inspectors visited lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils and staff during the inspection. Inspectors also met with leaders to discuss the school's curriculum and other aspects of the school's work. Inspectors looked at a range of curriculum areas during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments received during the inspection. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The lead inspector met with a group of pupils to explore their views about the school.
- Inspectors gathered evidence about the independent school standards during

meetings with leaders and the proprietor. Inspectors also considered policies and documents and toured the school's buildings and grounds with the headteacher.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. They considered a wide range of documents, policies and records, including the pre-appointment checks for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Shaun Jarvis, lead inspector

Ofsted 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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023