

Education and boarding inspection summary for Five Islands Academy

Church Road, Old Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly TR21 0NA

Inspection dates: 10–12 October 2023

Outcome

The education overall effectiveness judgement is: good

The judgement for the experiences and progress of children in the boarding provision is: good

What is it like to attend this school?

- Five Islands Academy is an inclusive, all-through school for pupils living on the Isles of Scilly. Most pupils attend school on the largest island, St Mary's. Primary-age pupils living on the islands of Tresco, Bryher, St Martins and St Agnes attend one of three 'off island' bases. From the age of 11, these pupils enjoy boarding at Mundesley House on St Mary's. This gives them access to subject-specialist teaching and resources ready for the secondary phase.
- The school provides a remarkable range of cultural experiences for pupils, especially within the arts. An impressive range of expert practitioners are brought to the islands to work creatively with pupils. Pupils are inspired to take the initiative with local projects of their own. For example, after securing National Lottery funding, Year 11 pupils are leading the redevelopment of the Isles of Scilly Museum.
- Pupils develop a powerful sense of community. Every effort is made to bring pupils from the different islands together. On Fridays, pupils come together as one school for a day of learning on St Mary's. The culture of the school is such that everyone works together to find solutions and resolve issues. Pupils regularly engage in constructive discussions. They feel safe to air any worries or fears during 'circle time', or to raise these privately with trusted staff.

The inspectors made **one** recommendation to help the school improve, covering the way that teaching is adapted for different pupils.

What is it like to board at this school?

- Boarders enjoy the opportunities provided by staying in the boarding house. This includes spending time with friends and joining clubs. They say they would recommend it to others. Boarders are able to take part in a wide range of activities. House parents support them to make the most of outdoor activities such as kayaking, rock climbing and going to the skatepark. In the boarding house, boarders enjoy painting, crafts, baking and murder mystery evenings. One of the highlights for boarders is the annual sleep-out in December, which raises money for charity. These activities benefit boarders and enhance their social development.
- The boarding house is a warm and welcoming environment. Boarders say they are comfortable in the house. They enjoy eating meals together, where they talk about their day. Boarders are particularly pleased with the renovated shower facilities, which now give them more privacy.
- Boarders are well prepared for their move into the boarding house. They regularly visit from an early age, knowing this is where they will move to. At the end of Year 6, they have an overnight stay to get used to the house and their rooms. One boarder said the transition was 'honest' and that staff showed boarding how it really is.
- Boarders have the opportunity to develop independence and life skills in a safe and structured way. Boarders come from smaller, more rural islands. Boarding offers a stepping stone before many move to post-16 provision in larger towns and cities on the mainland. As such, they get used to busier roads, more people and larger shops. Boarders successfully move on to post-16 provision, and by this stage are well prepared for living away from home.
- Boarding staff work in partnership with school staff to ensure they understand boarders needs and provide the appropriate support to help boarders to attend school and achieve their individual goals. Boarding staff support boarders with homework and encourage activities that complement their learning and development.
- Boarders have healthy meals prepared by the school. Most boarders enjoy these meals, however some do not. Leaders seek feedback and review the meals provided. House parents ensure boarders have access to alternatives, but also encourage them to try a variety of food.
- Feedback from parents is mixed. Most parents say that they can contact house parents if they need to. However, some parents feel there is a lack of structure to time in boarding and that some boarders are bullied. The mixed feedback

contrasts with the views of boarders themselves, who are mostly very positive about their experiences.

The school **meets all the national minimum standards**

The inspectors made **3 recommendations** to help the school improve, covering the advice pupils receive about relationships, health and sex, record keeping, and communication with parents.

- View the full inspection report for the education provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/28/144638>
- View the full inspection report for the boarding provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/1/SC042065>



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 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 2021