

Education and residential inspection summary for St Catherine's School

Grove Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1TT

Inspection dates: 30 January to 1 February 2024

Outcome

The education overall effectiveness judgement is: good

The judgement for the experiences and progress of children in the residential provision is: outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being a part of this caring school community. They feel safe and secure here, knowing that they are supported by their teachers and other school staff. As well as a broad academic curriculum, pupils benefit from a focus on wider goals such as communication skills and preparation for adult life. They are well prepared to take their next steps by the time they leave the school.

The wide range of pupils' talents is reflected in the extra-curricular offer at the school. Activities such as sports, choir, forest school and swimming are used as opportunities to further develop pupils' social, communication and motor skills. Students in the sixth form particularly benefit from opportunities to do similar activities in the wider community, for example using local gym facilities.

Parents and carers are incredibly positive about the school. Many of the pupils who attend here do so following challenging experiences in mainstream settings. In responding to Ofsted's survey, many parents told us about the transformational impact this school has had on their children. One parent wrote: 'Without exception, the staff are dedicated, committed and devoted to doing all they can for each child in their care. They are experienced, capable, knowledgeable and patient.'

The inspectors made one recommendation to help the school improve, covering the school's approach to improve the teaching of writing across the school.

What is it like to stay at this school?

Students thrive due to the exceptional quality of the individualised care and support provided by staff. There is a strong sense of community. Care, education and therapy staff work exceptionally well as a team to ensure that students' learning and support are continual. The sense of mutual respect is a strength throughout the students' waking day.

Students have warm and nurturing relationships with staff who strive for them to achieve. Staff have a meticulous understanding of each student and how to tailor the support needed to meet their individual needs. Staff speak passionately about the students, and they are proud of their contribution in helping them to succeed.

Students make exceptional progress, supported and accelerated by a skilled team of staff who work closely together. Staff identify and understand the critical areas for each student's development and target these in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. This includes working in partnership with students' families. One parent said: 'My child has made remarkable progress in his learning since being at St Catherine's. This has been life-changing for them, and also for us as a family.'

The therapeutic and health team provides expert guidance and support to ensure that practice is well informed and makes a positive difference to students' lives. Students make transformative progress in their emotional, social and personal development. For example, students with medical needs are supported to manage their conditions themselves, promoting their independence in preparation for their futures.

Students, alongside their families, are actively involved in their care planning, giving them a sense of ownership in their lives. Students are listened to in a variety of ways. This is a key strength throughout their residential experience. For example, students can raise concerns, give compliments and make requests through communication boards in their houses.

Students are encouraged to participate in activities that promote their sense of achievement, confidence and self-worth. The after-school club, The Grove, is a hub of enjoyment and laughter while providing opportunities to learn vital social skills. Students said that they now have new friends and enjoy having fun with them.

Parents value and praise the quality of care and attention that staff give to residential students. One parent said: 'They are amazing, always so receptive. I am really impressed with the amount of communication. Everyone knows the children really well. They are doing everything right.'

- View the full inspection report for the education provision: [St Catherine's School and College - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted](#).
- View the full inspection report for the residential provision: [St Catherine's School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted](#).



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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

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