

# Inspection of a good school: Medina House School

School Lane, Newport Isle of Wight PO30 2HS

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Inspection dates: 28 to 29 February 2024

## Outcome

Medina House School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy place to be. Pupils are safe and well cared for by staff who know them well. Pupils consistently demonstrate kind attitudes to one another. For example, they give others time to communicate, or gently take their friend's hand to guide them around the school. Play times are enjoyable for all. Pupils are enthusiastic about the imaginative games they play on the school field. Everyone is included, and they enjoy playing on the accessible swings and slides. Younger children are well supported to play and relax in their recently developed outdoor area. Adults skilfully support them to make choices about their play, such as taking time to read stories or explore the mud kitchen.

Every pupil is respected as a unique individual. Parents agree, with one commenting: 'Medina House are amazing at looking at each child individually and adjusting to their needs accordingly. My child is now able to succeed.' Attendance is high because pupils love coming to school. Staff are united in their ambition for pupils to achieve all they are capable of. Pupils are taught how to understand their own emotions and helped to develop strategies to regulate their behaviour. This means that pupils behave well and concentrate on their learning. In fact, many pupils describe their lessons as 'fun' and 'amazing'.

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

New leaders have quickly focused on continuing to improve and strengthen the quality of education across all aspects of the school. They have worked collaboratively with staff to put in place a broad curriculum. Staff get to know pupils very well before they start at school. This means that personalised provision to meet their health, care and medical needs is put in place straight away. This helps new pupils to settle in quickly and engage with their learning. Pupils in this school have a very diverse range of needs, so they follow one of three carefully organised learning pathways. All pupils benefit from fun and engaging lessons. For example, teachers make creative use of outdoor spaces to promote pupils' physical development. Pupils clearly delight in the innovative activities which

stimulate their senses with tactile, visual and musical learning. Staff get to know and understand pupils' preferences and special interests. They skilfully use these to motivate them to learn. As a result pupils make great progress towards their individual goals. When the time comes to move on to secondary school, pupils are confident and well prepared for their next steps.

Currently, not all staff have the relevant expertise to meet the diverse needs of the pupils. For example, some pupils need expert support to help them to use symbols or technology to communicate. Others need staff to have specialist expertise to help them develop fine motor skills or to follow specific learning routines. New leaders have identified the need to ensure the right staff are provided with training as necessary.

A favourite place for pupils to visit is the warm and inviting new library. This provides pupils with an array of interesting books to explore. They discover favourite authors and broaden their interests as staff read them lots of stories. As appropriate, pupils benefit from creative approaches such as sensory or massage stories. Younger children enjoy joining in with singing and signing routines and fun action rhymes.

The school has identified the need to sharpen the focus on how pupils are taught to read. This includes implementing a consistent approach to teaching phonics to ensure that all pupils who are able to become fluent readers, are well supported. Alongside this, there is work underway to teach all pupils the important vocabulary they need to fully access the curriculum. This includes the development of an equally rigorous and sequential approach to support pupils learning to read symbols and those at the very earliest stages of reading.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that enrich their learning. Swimming lessons in the school pool are a highlight. They also eagerly anticipate the opportunity to put their wellies on and enjoy regular Forest School sessions. These opportunities help children begin to develop their confidence right from when they start in the school. There is a strong moral commitment to helping all pupils make a valuable contribution to their local community. This takes many forms, including displaying pupil's art in a local exhibition, going to the beach to surf on specially adapted boards or using their symbols to communicate to staff in local shops. Pupils who had taken part in the recent 'Dance Live' competition were delighted by their achievement performing on a real stage. Through this work pupils learn that they have a role to play in their community.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school has recently reviewed and is in the process of updating the teaching of phonics and early reading across the school. This means that currently, some pupils do

not receive the precise and tailored support they need. The school should ensure this recent work is embedded so that all pupils are supported with their reading.

- Due to recent changes, not all staff have the relevant specialist expertise they need. As a result, a small number of pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. The school should continue to develop staff's specialist knowledge and skills so that pupils are expertly supported to achieve well.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2014.

## 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>	118228
<b>Local authority</b>	Isle of Wight
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296250
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	109
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Andrew Trotter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Berry
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.medinahouseschool.co.uk">http://www.medinahouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date(s) of previous inspection</b>	April 2014

## Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 years who have severe learning disabilities.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

## 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 met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and communication, mathematics and creative arts. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governor meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Petch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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