

# Releasing Potential School

7 Kingscroft Court, Ridgway, Havant PO9 1LS

**Inspection date**

19 June 2024

**Overall outcome**

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 32(1) to 32(1)(c)*

- At the last standard inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding were judged to be effective and this part of the independent school standards (the standards) was met.
- The safeguarding policy complies with present guidelines and is also published on the provider's website in accordance with part 6 of the standards. The link to the policy on the school's website is not working. The proprietor body is addressing this issue. However, policies linked to safeguarding, bullying, welfare, health and safety are available to parents on request. New parents are provided with a copy of these policies when their child joins the school.
- Some safeguarding leaders are new to their roles. They are knowledgeable about pupils' individual vulnerabilities and about the potential risks pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities face. The school works closely with external agencies, when necessary, to support pupils and their families.
- Pupils who met with the inspector told her that they feel safe and are safe at the school. They trust staff will help them deal with any worries or concerns they may have.
- Leaders have introduced a new system for recording and responding to safeguarding concerns. Despite this, some safeguarding records reviewed by the inspector were not sufficiently rigorous. This means that although records clearly identified the concern, there were omissions about the actions taken immediately and over time. Leaders do not scrutinise records as a matter of routine.
- All new staff complete a comprehensive catalogue of safeguarding training. This includes specific training about the 'Prevent' duty, child-on-child abuse and online safety. Staff also benefit from the twice daily briefings where leaders share and discuss key safety information. They understand what to do to report their concerns about pupils. Nevertheless, some staff are not suitably alert to potential safeguarding risks to some pupils. This means that they do not always promote the welfare of pupils.
- The relevant standards in part 3 are not met.

#### Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

*Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(b), 21(1), 21(3) to 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(b)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, some requirements of this part of the standards were judged to be unmet. It was found that the proprietor body had not ensured that all relevant recruitment checks were carried out and recorded in line with statutory guidance.
- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor body has ensured that the single central record (SCR) meets statutory requirements. Appropriate recruitment and suitability checks, including prohibition from teaching checks and separate barred list checks, have been completed for all staff. The date of all required pre-appointment checks is recorded on the SCR for all new staff.
- The school has also ensured that the relevant management checks have been carried out on members of the proprietor body, trustees and governors.
- Senior leaders and key members of the proprietor and governing body have completed safer recruitment training. The school has established quality assurance processes to make sure that the single central record is accurate and compliant with legislation.
- The previously unmet standards in this part are now met.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(b)*

- At the last inspection, some of the standards were judged to be unmet. Weaknesses were identified in the school's curriculum design, governance, single central record, admissions registers and in some procedures relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The school's post Ofsted action plan was submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) in February 2024 and subsequently rejected by the DfE in April 2024. Evidence from this inspection shows that the revised post Ofsted action plan continues to be too descriptive. Leaders have not set out precisely what improvements are needed and how the intended improvements will be achieved or measured. Consequently, some aspects of the action plan have not been implemented securely. Leaders recognise that there is some urgent and important work to do to refine the action plan so that it is evaluative and sets precise success criteria.
- A governing body has now been established and met for the first time in May 2024. Governors are receiving relevant training to understand their role in holding leaders to account for key aspects of the provision and the requirements of the standards. It is too early to measure the impact of their work.
- Some staff and leaders joined the school in September 2023. They do not yet demonstrate the required knowledge and training to fulfil their roles well. The proprietor body has appointed two experienced external advisors who will work with governors, the leadership team and staff to provide important training and support.
- School leaders and the proprietor body demonstrate the capacity to continue driving improvement. However, some key aspects of their work are not effective and leaders

have not ensured that the requirements of the standards are 'consistently' met. Therefore, part 8 remains un-met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	144808
DfE registration number	850/6093
Inspection number	10343583

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

Type of school	Secondary
School status	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Releasing Potential
Chair	Paul Suter
Headteacher	Michael King (executive headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,630
Telephone number	02392 479 762
Website	<a href="http://www.releasingpotential.com">www.releasingpotential.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@releasingpotential.com">admin@releasingpotential.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	28 to 30 November 2023

## Information about this school

- Releasing Potential School forms part of the Releasing Potential charity.
- The school is located on two sites, one in Havant and the other in Chichester. Both sites occupy former industrial premises that have been refurbished to provide educational facilities:
  - Unit 7, Kingscroft Court, Ridgway, Havant PO9 1LS
  - 4 St James' Works, St Pancras, Chichester PO19 7NN.
- The executive headteacher is also the chief executive officer of the proprietor body.

- The school makes use of local leisure and wildlife facilities to educate pupils. They also make use of other facilities that they own and operate, including some farmland, a sailing centre, a coffee hut and an outboard motor workshop.
- The school offers provision for pupils aged between 11 and 18 years. Currently, all pupils are boys. Those who are in Year 12 or Year 13 follow the same curriculum as younger pupils. They are typically placed in the school because they are emotionally vulnerable and mainstream post-16 education would not suit them.
- All pupils have an education and health care plan for social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils are placed in the school by either Hampshire or West Sussex local authority.
- Pupils have typically previously found it difficult to maintain a place in mainstream settings or pupil referral units.
- The school is currently using one unregistered alternative provider.

## **Information about this inspection**

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in November 2023. The inspection was carried out with no notice.
- Following the previous inspection, the DfE required the school to prepare a statutory action plan. Ofsted evaluated the action plan on 15 March 2024. The DfE wrote to the school rejecting the plan on 19 April 2024. The inspector considered the school's revised action plan during this inspection.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer who was representing the proprietorial body. She met with the interim headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, and other senior leaders. The inspector held a video call with three trustees, the chair of governors and two other governors.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and children; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.
- The inspector considered a range of documentation associated with the relevant standards checked during the inspection. A range of other documents and policies, including those on the school's website, were reviewed by the inspector. The inspector also reviewed the school's development plan and governors' and trustees' minutes.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their learning and experiences at school. She also met with a group of staff.

## **Inspection team**

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection*

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and

### **The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards**

#### **Part 4: Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

17. The standards about the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors are those contained in this Part.

18. (1) The standard in this paragraph relates to the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff at the school, other than the proprietor and supply staff.

(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if—

(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction.

21. (1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.

(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is—

(a) in relation to each member of staff (“S”) appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether—

(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction,

including the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained; and

(b) in relation to each member of staff (“S”), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

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