

# Releasing Potential School

7 Kingscroft Court, Ridgway, Havant PO9 1LS

**Inspection date**

26 February 2025

**Overall outcome**

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Part 6: Provision of information

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

- At the standard inspection in November 2023, the school's safeguarding arrangements were judged to be effective, with minor improvements needed to how recruitment checks were done and to how leaders followed up concerns referred to other agencies. At the progress monitoring inspection in June 2024, improvement was judged to be insufficient and the associated independent school standards (the standards) were judged as not met. In particular, there were some omissions in safeguarding records, a lack of routine oversight of reported incidents and some inconsistency in how well staff understood potential risks to some pupils.
- Since then, considerable and effective work has been done to address historical weaknesses. The profile of safeguarding within the school has been raised, strengthening a culture that it is everyone's responsibility. Staff understand what to do when concerns arise, which actions they have ownership of and when and where to seek support. This enables them to act quickly when necessary, and to help build a picture of individual pupils and their potential vulnerabilities.
- Leaders have taken sensible steps to make safeguarding reporting systems effective. They have simplified how incidents are categorised, helping them to identify emerging patterns in behaviour that may indicate concerns. Staff receive useful and ongoing training that has already improved the quality of incident reporting. Better communication now helps to keep key workers abreast of any concerns arising about the pupils they are responsible for, enabling them to take greater ownership and provide better support.
- Records show safeguarding concerns being reported and recorded in a clear and helpful way, with timely and appropriate action taken. Senior staff, including the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), meet routinely to review safeguarding records, enabling them to identify promptly when pupils need additional help.

- Staff demonstrate being alert to safeguarding risks that are specific to the school's context, including location, pupil cohort and ways of working. Daily briefings provide staff with ongoing opportunities to share emerging information about individual pupils. This enables them to consider risks in a timely way, adapting ways of working in response.
- Staff are particularly alert to risks around transporting pupils between different venues, dynamics between pairs or groups of pupils and lone working. Leaders give particularly careful thought to safeguarding pupils and staff as they work and move flexibly across a range of venues. Processes for monitoring staff and pupil whereabouts are well established and thoughtful.
- The proprietor has made sensible use of expert advice from beyond the school to support the school's safeguarding work. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements and policies reflect those of the local authority where the school is based. Policies are published to parents and carers via the school's website, as required by the standards. Reviews of safeguarding arrangements are a routine and integral part of governors' and trustees' monitoring arrangements, helping to ensure that statutory duties are met.
- The school now meets the previously unmet standards in this part.

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

### *Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(b)*

- At the last standard inspection, leadership and management required improvement. While leadership changes had led to improvements in how the school was organised, some of these changes were not fully in place. Proprietor oversight at that time was not sufficient to ensure that the standards were being met consistently over time. When the monitoring inspection took place in June 2024, further work was needed to refine how actions and standards are monitored, to support the school's ongoing improvement journey. Consequently, some standards in part 8 remained unmet.
- The action plan submitted to Ofsted following the June 2024 progress monitoring inspection was evaluated as being unsatisfactory. The plan lacked specificity about the actions leaders intended taking to improve the school's safeguarding arrangements. Some actions were too broad to be likely to bring about the improvements needed. In contrast, evidence collected during this inspection showed leaders now having a secure grasp on the school's improvement priorities and acting effectively to address them. This is reflected in the previously unmet standards in part 3 now being met.
- Leaders' deliberate investment in external support has helped the school to address historical weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements and to improve the rigour of monitoring and leadership oversight. Learning from monitoring visits is shared with leaders, governors and trustees, helping them form an accurate picture of the school's strengths and to identify priorities for ongoing improvement.
- Staff report that school leaders' roles and responsibilities are more clearly defined than in the past, helping everyone to go about their work in a meaningful and effective way. Staff value how leaders listen and respond to their views about what is working well and what could be even better.
- At the previous monitoring inspection, a governing body had recently been put in place to support the proprietor body. This group is now well established, with clear

responsibilities that define its role as a critical friend. Systems are used well to share relevant information in a timely way, helping governors and trustees to challenge school leaders appropriately about standards in the school.

- The proprietor and governors bring a broad range of expertise to their roles. This is supplemented well by access to relevant training that helps them to develop their collective understanding of relevant aspects, such as safeguarding and the standards.
- The previously unmet standards in this part are now met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school meets 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. 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.

### **The school now meets 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.

#### **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.

## School details

Unique reference number	144808
DfE registration number	850/6093
Inspection number	10376427

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	Other independent school
School status	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Releasing Potential Ltd
Chair	Paul Jenkins
Headteacher	Olly Parker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,970
Telephone number	02392 479 762
Website	<a href="http://www.releasingpotential.com/school">www.releasingpotential.com/school</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 is owned and operated by Releasing Potential Limited, a charitable organisation, which also incorporates an outdoor education division that operates separately to the school. Collectively, the school and outdoor education division provide education and outreach support for children and young people, particularly those who find traditional classroom-based education challenging.

- Releasing Potential Ltd has a board of trustees, which acts as the proprietor body for the school. There is also a governing body, which has clearly defined responsibilities for oversight of standards in the school.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan, with social, emotional and mental health identified as their primary need. They are referred to the school by Hampshire or West Sussex local authorities, who fund their placements.
- The school operates from two sites: Unit 7, Kingscroft Court, Ridgway, Havant PO9 1LS and 4 St James' Works, St Pancras, Chichester PO19 7NN.
- As part of their educational package, pupils spend some of their time onsite at one or more of the outreach satellite centres run by Releasing Potential Ltd's outdoor education division: Willow Farm, Blue Brew café, Emsworth Outboards and Sailing Centre, Northney. They are accompanied throughout by staff from Releasing Potential School. Pupils do not access other alternative provision beyond the satellite sites that exist as part of the wider Releasing Potential organisation.
- The school's most-recent standard inspection took place on 28 to 30 November 2023, when it was judged to require improvement. Since then, it has submitted two action plans to the DfE and has had one progress monitoring inspection prior to this one. The previous progress monitoring inspection took place in June 2024 and judged some, but not all, of the previously unmet standards to be met.
- Since the last progress monitoring inspection in June 2024, there have been personnel changes in some leadership roles. The head of school took up their post in November 2024, with the previous acting postholder resuming their substantive role as SENCo. The chair of the proprietor took on this role from January 2025, having previously been a member of the proprietor body. The DfE has been notified of the change of proprietor chair.

## 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 inspection was conducted without notice.
- Prior to this inspection, the school submitted an action plan to the DfE, outlining how it would address the independent school standards that remained unmet at the previous progress monitoring inspection in July 2024. That action plan was evaluated by Ofsted in October 2024 and deemed to be unsatisfactory. Action planning seen as part of this inspection showed that leaders now have a clear plan for improving the school, which is reflected in them now meeting all of the previously unmet standards.
- In addition to considering the previously unmet standards in parts 3 and 8, the inspector also reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements more broadly. This included checking the single central record of pre-employment checks and the availability and suitability of the school's safeguarding policy. These requirements of the independent school standards were found to be met.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, head of school, SENCo and DSL. She also spoke informally with pupils, with staff present and met with a small group of staff. She spoke to the chair of the governing body on the telephone and to the chair of the proprietor body via video call.
- The inspector visited both of the school's sites, checked the single central record and reviewed the safeguarding policy and records of safeguarding concerns. She considered a range of first-hand and documentary evidence about leadership and management, including reports from support and accountability visits carried out by Hampshire local authority and other external advisers commissioned by the school. She also reviewed information available via the school's website and provided by school leaders.

## Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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