

Inspection of Small Haven School

146–150, Newington Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6PT

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. When asked, some were hard pressed to think of what could be better, agreeing that they like it, 'as it is'. Pupils are accepting of their 'unique' differences. Older pupils say that they are certain that the school has improved. They link the excellent behaviour witnessed by inspectors to the patience and adaptability of staff, saying that staff act with 'lightning speed' if pupils bring their problems into school.

Pupils think that staff expect a lot, but say they 'don't feel judged' if they have a bad day. Pupils report that they feel free from bullying, although they do fall out with each other sometimes. They particularly appreciate the school's 'learning for life' programme. One shared openly: 'I actually went on a trip. I never would have in the past, but now I'm comfortable with myself and who I am, and I trust staff.' Another pupil reported that the school had given her the confidence to 'do anything'.

Most parents and carers who expressed an opinion are positive about the school. One wrote that the school, 'gives parents the information they need to know, not what they want to hear'. However, a minority of parents expressed less positive views.

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

This is a good and improving school. A student currently in the sixth form described the school as having a certain 'niceness'. He further reflected that academic achievement was not the only thing that mattered here and that he did not think that was a bad thing. Inspectors found that the school's work to support pupils' social and emotional development is certainly one of its strengths. Staff understand the importance of building pupils' confidence and self-esteem in order for them to engage successfully with learning once they are in the classroom.

Pupils' personal development is given a high priority at Small Haven. The school's 'learning for life' programme incorporates sex and relationships education and is supplemented by weekly question-time sessions. These challenge pupils to understand the world around them and to explore more fully what it means to grow up in Britain. Older pupils are knowledgeable about equalities and are comfortable with, and sensitive to, the needs of others when discussing topics such as gender identity. During one classroom visit, younger pupils enjoyed discussing the ending of COVID-19 restrictions and what that might mean for themselves and their families.

The school's wider curriculum offer is constantly evolving. This is partly driven by the needs of changing cohorts of pupils, as well as the school's gradual expansion over the last few years. Leaders have strengthened leadership of the curriculum since the previous inspection. This includes the appointment of new subject leads and a qualified special educational needs coordinator, improving pupils' access to the curriculum across all phases of the school.

Pupils in the upper school and students in the sixth form are now able to achieve GCSE qualifications in English language and mathematics, if appropriate to their ability, aspirations and chosen pathways. Other pathways always include functional English and mathematics as a basis to build on. These might also include BTEC National Diploma courses or Arts Award at different levels. Older pupils are also supported to access activities linked to their specific interests, such as at a local country estate or a local commercial radio station. Access to careers information and guidance is in place for all secondary-aged pupils, including from an independent external source. Work-experience opportunities and trips out of school are beginning to increase after being impacted negatively by COVID-19 restrictions.

Pupils in the lower and middle school follow programmes of study broadly aligned with the national curriculum. Adaptions are made to enable pupils to access learning at an appropriate level. Leaders are reviewing the science curriculum, in the hope of introducing additional qualifications at the end of key stage 4 and the sixth form.

Younger pupils who are at the early stage of learning to read enjoy their phonics lessons. These are very bespoke and often delivered on a one-to-one basis. Staff ensure that the reading ability of new pupils joining the school is thoroughly assessed. This includes older pupils who may not have had the support or encouragement to read and enjoy books before joining the school. A new, validated phonics programme has just been introduced. Although key staff have had extensive training in how to teach phonics in the past, leaders understand that additional training will now be needed. This will mean that staff fully utilise the complete range of benefits that the new programme brings.

Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. The school uses a commercial scheme, which staff tailor to pupils' abilities. Staff are competent in delivering mathematics lessons. Most have completed additional training in the last few years to support them in planning learning that is pitched at the right level for all pupils.

Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning. Their attendance reflects their enjoyment of school. Older pupils see themselves as role models for younger pupils. Classroom visits showed the school to be calm and relationships between staff and pupils to be respectful in both directions.

Staff are very positive about the school. Inspectors' discussions with teaching and support staff showed that staff have high levels of respect for both their colleagues and leaders at the school.

This is a small school with a small senior leadership team. Governance is provided by the two directors, with one acting as director of education. Both directors act in strategic and operational roles. They have a very hands-on approach to all aspects of the school, including the oversight of safeguarding and in ensuring that all of the independent school standards are consistently and fully met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture to keep pupils safe is strong and well established here. Routines and systems to protect the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are sound. Checks on adults working at the school are thorough. Directors and senior leaders have close oversight of safeguarding on a day-to-day basis. Staff know pupils well and know what to do if they have concerns. Pupils who met with inspectors said that staff keep them safe in school. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View survey think that their children feel safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme to the school very recently. Although staff who deliver the school's early reading programme are experienced and competent in teaching phonics, they now need additional training so that they can fully utilise all the benefits the new programme brings. This will enable them to access all of the programme's resources so that they can deliver the first-class phonics and early reading programme pupils at the school deserve.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	135018
DfE registration number	886/6103
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10214656
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Candice Education Services Ltd
Chair	Marissa Morgan
Headteacher	Stacey White
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,739 to £50,573
Telephone number	01843 597088
Website	www.smallhavenschool.co.uk
Email address	jodie@smallhavenschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 November 2017

Information about this school

- Small Haven School is a small independent special school that caters for the needs of pupils between the ages of six and 19. Many pupils have had gaps in their education or have been excluded from their previous schools prior to joining the school.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan that is often associated with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have additional needs such as autism spectrum disorder and speech and language difficulties.
- Since the previous standard inspection in November 2017, the school has increased the number and extended the age range of pupils and introduced a sixth-form provision. This change in the school's registration was approved by the Department for Education in June 2018.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the director of education, principal, curriculum leaders, and teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met with the school's directors and talked on the telephone to a representative of a local authority outside Kent that has a pupil placed at the school. He also considered a written submission from a representative of Kent's virtual school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds on pupils' knowledge over time.
- Inspectors toured the school's premises and accommodation. They checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff linked to the independent school standards.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.

- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. This included two formal meetings with different groups of pupils, including students from the sixth form.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted’s Parent View survey, as well as additional email correspondence from parents submitted during the inspection. Staff and pupil surveys were also considered.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Sue Bzikot

Ofsted Inspector

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