

Isle of Wight Studio School

Grange Road, East Cowes, Isle of Wight PO32 6EA

Inspection dates

2–3 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' self-evaluation of the quality of teaching and its impact on outcomes is over generous. Leaders are not sufficiently self-critical.
- Governors have not been suitably robust in their oversight of policies or the monitoring of safeguarding in the school. Although safeguarding practices are effective, policies are out of date and systems are not routinely monitored with sufficient challenge.
- Teaching activities are not well matched enough to the varying needs of the pupils. As a result, the most able pupils are not appropriately stretched, and disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make strong enough progress from their starting points.
- Some staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Current progress in both year groups is variable.
- Pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points in some subjects, particularly science and some vocational subjects. The progress made in mathematics is variable.
- Leaders' curriculum planning lacks depth and analysis. Although there is a broad range of enrichment activities, there is insufficient provision for physical education or religious education in the school.
- Although overall attendance has improved, there are still gaps between the attendance of some groups and their peers.

The school has the following strengths

- High-quality work placements ensure that pupils are equipped with a range of employment skills. Consequently, most pupils progress to further vocational courses or successfully engage in a variety of local apprenticeships.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are very loyal to their school and appreciate the opportunities it offers. They particularly value the wide range of enrichment activities.
- The headteacher is passionate about the school ethos and driven to promote the unique provision that the studio school offers pupils on the Isle of Wight. He has secured strong backing from businesses and the local community to support these aims.
- Leaders have engaged with other providers and external consultants to improve the quality of teaching in English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and governance by ensuring that:
 - more detailed curriculum planning enables teachers to focus their lessons on meeting the needs of different groups of pupils
 - specific targets and measurable milestones are set for staff so that they can be held accountable for the progress that pupils make
 - the accuracy of leaders' monitoring is improved
 - all teachers apply the school's agreed assessment and feedback procedures to enable pupils to improve their work
 - governors become skilled at using progress information to hold leaders more effectively to account for the quality of teaching and the achievement of all groups of pupils
 - policies and paperwork are kept fully up to date and are robust, and reliable record keeping reflects the strong safeguarding practices that exist within the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching across the school by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - plan challenging lessons that meet the needs of different groups of pupils
 - use skilful questioning to promote the rapid progress of all pupils, particularly the most able
 - promote pupils' deeper thinking through the application of their literacy, communication, mathematical and technical skills in other subjects.
- Accelerate the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities by continuing to:
 - train and equip teachers with the skills needed to reduce swiftly the gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills
 - improve their attendance to match the average attendance of other pupils nationally.

An external review of governance, with a particular focus on their oversight of safeguarding, should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should also be undertaken to assess the effectiveness with which this additional funding is used.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Parents and carers, staff and pupils have confidence in the leadership provided by the headteacher. Parents and pupils particularly value the industry-based learning opportunities offered and the good relationships and behaviour promoted within the school. All parents who responded to the Parent View online survey, and those who met with inspectors during this inspection, expressed the view that the school is well led and they would recommend the school.
- Since it was established in September 2014, the school has faced challenges that have had an impact on its efforts to raise achievement. These include difficulties in recruiting staff to some subject areas, varying cohort sizes, and large numbers of pupils joining the school with a variety of differing needs. These issues have had a proportionately greater impact because of the small size of the school.
- Leaders were not able to recruit sufficient students to study in the school sixth form and so it closed after its first year of operation. However, the school has fostered strong and effective links with local colleges, training providers and employers. Leaders have ensured that appropriate work placements and enrichment activities equip pupils with the skills and attributes required for their next stages of employment, education or training.
- Support from the Inspire Academy Trust (IAT), local authority and other external providers has not resulted in school leaders improving the achievement of pupils swiftly enough.
- Although leaders are aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, they have not been sufficiently self-critical of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the achievement that pupils make from their starting points. Leaders' assessment of the quality of these and some other aspects of the school's work has been over generous.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching is not linked sufficiently to the progress that pupils make. This means that, in some cases, there is a mismatch between the positive judgements made of teaching and the less positive pupil outcomes that are a result of teaching.
- Since this is a studio school, pupils follow a curriculum that is different from the curriculums normally offered in mainstream schools. The curriculum offers work placements in a varied range of business sectors, including marine manufacturing, engineering and renewable energy industries. The curriculum is effective in enabling pupils to engage in industry-based learning to a depth and quality that would not usually be available to them in a mainstream school.
- Subject leaders in mathematics and English have engaged with other schools and consultants well and have taken the opportunity to improve the quality of teachers' planning. This is improving the quality of teaching in these areas. Other aspects of the curriculum are not as effectively planned or delivered. For example, in science, curriculum planning does not provide sufficient coverage of all aspects of the GCSE curriculum or give guidance to teachers on how to meet the needs of different groups

of pupils. Consequently, the quality of learning is variable in this subject.

- Similarly, there is a lack of depth in leaders' planning for the school's 'CREATE' curriculum, which focuses on providing a wide range of employability and life skills. This means that there are weaknesses in provision for pupils' physical education, spiritual development and cultural awareness. As a result, pupils are not sufficiently equipped with the skills and understanding they need for life in a diverse modern Britain.
- The school receives additional funding to support the education of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders have plans in place for how this money is spent and have shared bespoke strategies to support these pupils with teachers. However, leaders' monitoring does not address how effectively teachers use this information to plan lessons and activities that adequately meet these pupils' needs. Currently, there is no additional teaching support in the school, and the progress made by these pupils is variable.
- Leaders have not provided additional information to teachers about the barriers faced by the disadvantaged pupils they teach. Consequently, many of these pupils are not having their needs met in lessons and this limits their progress over time.
- Individual pupils' attendance figures are monitored well by leaders, with support offered for vulnerable pupils to improve their attendance. Consequently, overall attendance, and that of groups, has improved.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a wealth of useful knowledge and experience from their business and educational backgrounds. They worked hard to oversee the successful transformation of the previous buildings into the studio school. They are passionate advocates of the school's unique identity and what it can offer pupils on the island. They provide useful links between employers, businesses and other organisations, and are very supportive of the headteacher.
- There have been weaknesses in how effectively governors have fulfilled their duties. At the time of this inspection not all the required policies were up to date or met current requirements. In addition, governors have not routinely challenged leaders to evaluate the quality of practices and procedures in place to ensure the safety of the pupils. Consequently, weaknesses in some record-keeping practices have gone unchallenged.
- Governors do not have a detailed enough understanding of the academic performance of different groups of pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged. This limits their ability to provide effective challenge to leaders about the suitability of the curriculum and current achievement of different groups of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders work well with parents, work-placement managers, the local college and other stakeholders to ensure an effective culture of safeguarding.
- Staff and governors receive appropriate and up-to-date training and are well informed about safeguarding matters. This means that they are able to carry out the school's

procedures effectively, ensuring a culture of vigilance.

- There are systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils. Leaders liaise with and engage external specialist expertise to offer timely support for vulnerable pupils. Records are kept of the regular communications with outside agencies. However, the organisation of these records is not sufficiently refined or robust.
- Staff, parents and pupils agree that the school offers a safe, secure and inclusive environment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is a culture of mutual respect between staff and pupils across the school. As a result, pupils feel comfortable and secure in their working environment.
- Teachers of English and mathematics have worked well with consultants to moderate their assessments and improve their subject-specialist knowledge and planning. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is particularly true in science and some vocational subjects, where standards are variable. Where this happens, pupils are not challenged to try their hardest and to do their best.
- Teachers do not use ongoing assessment sufficiently well to adapt learning activities to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. For example, pupils frequently complete the same work at the same time and using the same resources, which limits the progress that some groups make. Where this happens, the most able pupils are not stretched to deepen their thinking. Similarly, pupils who require high levels of support are unable to access their learning in ways that allow them to maximise their progress.
- Leaders are aware that the impact of teachers' questioning is variable. Some teachers use their strong subject and assessment knowledge to design engaging learning tasks, and then use probing questions to challenge pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils are engaged and make strong progress in lessons and over time. However, other teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, so their questioning is less effective. Where this is the case, too few pupils are stretched sufficiently.
- Most teachers give feedback to pupils in line with the school's policy. However, in some cases, too little attention is given to addressing pupils' misconceptions and giving them time to refine and improve their understanding. Consequently, there is some inconsistency between different classes in how well pupils demonstrate the capacity to learn from their mistakes.
- Literacy and mathematics are not developed consistently well across the curriculum. Too few opportunities exist in science, humanities and the vocational subjects for extended writing tasks that promote deeper thinking and reflection on what has been learned. Similarly, mathematical skills are not developed well across the different subjects. Often, graphs, diagrams and charts lack the precision and detail required in GCSE courses.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils report that they feel safe and secure in school. They can confidently recall how to keep themselves safe, including when at their work placements and accessing the internet.
- Some pupils join the school with a range of emotional and behavioural needs, while others have suffered with anxiety issues. In many cases, their experience at previous schools has not been positive. Parents and pupils particularly value how staff have 'gone the extra mile' to build strong relationships and offer engaging enrichment activities. Consequently, the school is effective at meeting these pupils' pastoral needs.
- Pupils say that there is little bullying of any kind, and they are confident that leaders will always listen and intervene to put a stop to any unkind behaviour.
- The studio school offers pupils opportunities to develop business experience in a variety of areas including local marine manufacturing, engineering and renewable energy industries. This enables them to develop a range of work-readiness skills. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education or an apprenticeship. College staff and business leaders recognise the comparative strengths that studio school pupils have in terms of work ethos and how well they present themselves for interview.
- The pupils who attend The Isle of Wight College for part of the week benefit from the provision of courses that suit their interests. Strong communication between staff at the college and the school ensures that pupils' welfare needs are met, and they make strong progress on their chosen courses.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils want to do well and try hard in lessons. Many of them take advantage of the intervention classes and other activities after school to deepen and extend their learning.
- Historically, the rates of exclusion were high but this was related to a particular cohort issue in the first years of the school. Conduct and teamwork have improved and, as a result, there are notably fewer incidents of poor behaviour, including behaviour that may result in pupils receiving an exclusion from the school.
- Pupils value their education, and overall attendance is in line with the national average. Leaders recognise that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities needs further improvement.
- Pupils respect the school and take care of their surroundings; there is no litter or graffiti. Leaders are visible, welcoming pupils into school in the morning and interacting positively at break- and lunchtime. Business briefings are used to promote teamwork and reward success.
- Pupils arrive to lessons on time and are prepared to learn. They are well behaved and very few incidents of low-level disruption were seen during the inspection. Pupils

generally have positive attitudes to learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes from the school's first GCSE results in 2016 indicated that pupils underperformed overall, particularly in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils made significantly less progress than their peers in this cohort. In 2017, GCSE outcomes improved. Last year, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, made better progress overall, including in mathematics. However, outcomes in English dipped. Support from external consultants has resulted in improvements being made in English this year. Although pupils' progress is still variable in English and mathematics, a higher proportion of pupils are on track to attain at least a grade 4 GCSE in both subjects this summer.
- There is too much variation in the progress that pupils make, particularly in science, humanities and the vocational subjects, and outcomes for all pupils require improvement. This includes pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This variation is apparent between subjects and within some subjects. For example, in mathematics and science, pupils have not made consistently good progress over time.
- Differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers are reducing, but gaps remain. There is variation in how effectively teachers ensure that learning activities address the needs of these pupils.
- The achievement of the most able pupils requires improvement. Some teaching is not challenging enough for these pupils. For example, in business studies, the targets set for pupils are too low, which restricts their aspirations and the progress they make. In other areas, such as science, too few opportunities exist to engage pupils in deeper thinking through the application of scientific concepts, methods and theories they have learned. By contrast, where teaching has higher expectations, progress is more rapid and sustained.
- Weak literacy skills are preventing pupils from making sufficiently rapid progress. Too many pupils do not present their work well, or take pride with their handwriting. Some pupils lack the confidence and skills to write well at length. Some pupils' poor spelling, punctuation and grammar are not being tackled consistently well by staff. Similarly, mathematics is not promoted well across the curriculum, for example through the accurate use of calculations and interpretation of graphs and charts.
- Nevertheless, rates of progress for pupils currently in school are improving, including for disadvantaged pupils. Actions to tackle the weakest teaching, including moderation of work and training from external consultants, are having a positive impact.
- Pupils enjoy their learning in the school's specialist subject areas. Pupils and their parents enthuse about the value of the school's work placements. Pupils say that the links to practical and workplace contexts add greatly to the relevance and enjoyment of learning.

School details

Unique reference number	140948
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	10024493

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy studio school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chief Executive Officer	Sarah Stannard
Headteacher	Richard White
Telephone number	01983 284299
Website	www.iowstudioschool.co.uk
Email address	info@iowstudioschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Isle of Wight Studio School is a small studio school that offers pupils a range of vocational courses and work placements alongside more traditional subjects. The school opened in September 2014 under The Inspire Academy Trust and the headteacher has been in post since that time.
- The school was established to offer places to pupils between the ages of 14 and 19. The sixth form opened in September 2016. Owing to limited numbers of students, the school closed the sixth form at the end of the same academic year. Currently, the school only provides for pupils in key stage 4.
- In April 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) had agreed in principle to close the school. This provisional decision was subject to a four-week listening period, which was under way at the time of this inspection.
- A large proportion of pupils attend alternative provision at The Isle of Wight College for half a day each week to study vocational courses.

- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2017, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not comply with DfE guidance on what academies should publish about the content of the curriculum.
- The large majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who receive support is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 20 lessons and a business briefing in order to gather evidence to contribute to their evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Many of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Telephone discussions were held with the chief executive officer of the Inspire Academy Trust and the vice-principal of The Isle of Wight College.
- During the two days of this inspection, all learning was being conducted in school, so no pupils were off site at their work placements. Views were sought from staff, pupils and parents. In addition, a meeting was held with a small group of business leaders. This, together with feedback expressed in correspondence from other work-placement managers, contributed towards inspectors' evaluation of this aspect of provision.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books across a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils around the school and during lessons, and met with pupils to gather their views.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in 15 replies to a staff survey and 56 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, a meeting was held with two parents at their request.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to policies, curriculum planning, safety, self-evaluation, and pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed the record of leaders' vetting and checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils.

Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector

Richard Carlyle

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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