

A report on
Sporting Chance

Unit 2
Usk Way
Newport
NP20 2HZ

Date of inspection: June 2026

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales

About Sporting Chance

Name of provider	Sporting Chance
Proprietor status	Owned by Sporting Chance Newport, a community interest company.
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent Special
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	14
Pupils of statutory school age	14
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	19/11/2024
Start date of inspection	16/06/2026

School context

Sporting Chance opened in summer 2021 as an independent day school providing additional learning provision for pupils with social, emotional, and mental health needs.

The school is located close to the centre of the city of Newport and is administered by Sporting Chance Newport, a community interest company.

The school is registered for up to 20 pupils aged 11 to 16 years. There are currently 14 pupils on roll, all of whom have an individual development plan (IDP). A few pupils are looked after by local authorities in Wales. The school has two classes, KS3 and KS4.

The headteacher has been in post since April 2024. He is supported by two class teachers, a head of sport, a well-being and pastoral officer, a resilience and inclusion mentor, an administration assistant and a team of learning support assistants.

Previous recommendations

- R1 Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
- R2 Improve procedures for quality assurance and improvement planning to focus on pupil progress
- R3 Improve the quality of pupils' targets and ensure that they inform the planning of teaching activities
- R4 Ensure that curriculum planning provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn in real life contexts and to follow their desired learning pathways
- R5 Reduce the variability in the quality of teaching across the school and strengthen the planning and provision for skills

Summary

Sporting Chance school uses sport successfully to foster engagement and create positive attitudes towards learning. Staff have a strong understanding of pupils' individual needs and use personalised approaches to help them settle well and participate in school life. Strong pastoral provision and trusting relationships underpin pupils' well-being.

Leaders show a strong commitment to supporting pupils' social, emotional and behavioural development. They work closely with families and external agencies and have established a secure safeguarding culture.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened staffing and broadened the curriculum, including vocational and accredited pathways that better reflect pupils' interests and future ambitions. However, the progressive planning for skills development across the curriculum lacks clarity.

Many pupils make worthwhile gains in attendance, participation and personal development during their time at school. Nearly all pupils transition on to positive destinations when they finish year 11. However, teacher feedback does not consistently help drive pupils' learning forward.

Main evaluation

Sporting Chance school uses sport effectively as a tool to improve engagement in learning. The school knows its pupils very well and plans effectively, supporting pupils to actively participate in their learning. For example, in 'Peak and Pit' sessions at the end of the day, pupils and staff reflect on successes and challenges in an honest and respectful manner.

Pastoral support is a notable strength of the school. Pupils value this support and the relationships they develop whilst at school. Staff use a range of systems to recognise and celebrate positive behaviours and achievements. Staff use the school's rewards framework to successfully promote a sense of belonging and healthy competition while reinforcing positive relationships. As a result, many pupils develop improved self-confidence, resilience and engage positively in school life.

Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to understanding and responding to the complex social, emotional and behavioural needs of pupils and place an important emphasis on building trusting relationships with pupils and their families. They work proactively with external agencies to secure support and are advocates for pupils. Leaders have developed a secure safeguarding culture where staff have a strong understanding of their role in keeping pupils safe.

Leaders have a clear vision for the school, with shared values which are well understood by staff. Leaders have made suitable progress towards the recommendations left at the time of the core inspection. The school has strengthened its staffing structure, and leaders have developed greater capacity to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. For example, vocational and accredited learning offers have been expanded. These developments provide pupils with opportunities to achieve qualifications that align more closely with their interests and future aspirations.

The recent introduction of a curriculum leadership team has strengthened oversight of curriculum planning and delivery. Teachers meet regularly to evaluate provision and promote consistency across subjects. Staff have developed a common lesson structure that provides pupils with familiar routines and supports engagement in learning. However, wider planning for progressive skills development over time lacks clarity.

The school strengthens its curriculum offer with a wide range of external speakers who act as positive role models for learners. For example, visits from Olympians and rugby players to discuss making positive choices for your future, or veterans as part of Remembrance Day events. Further, other links, such as with third sector organisations, support pupils' learning in important areas such as relationships education and staying safe.

Over time, many pupils make secure progress in their attendance, engagement in education and development of physical and social skills. Leaders have recently introduced a new approach to assessment using sporting terminology to successfully engage pupils, ranging from 'grass roots', to 'semi-pro' and 'world class'. However, feedback to pupils on how to improve their work and drive their learning forward is inconsistent.

The school is establishing a positive culture of professional learning. Leaders work collaboratively with external partners to identify development priorities and provide a broad range of professional learning opportunities. Staff are encouraged to develop expertise and share effective practice with colleagues. This is in the early stages of implementation, and it is too soon to evaluate its impact.

The school promotes a secure focus on preparation for adulthood, particularly for older learners who benefit from relevant experiences such as work-related experience or attending careers fayres. Currently, nearly all year 11 pupils have clear plans for their progression to further education and work at the end of their time at school, and over the last three years, nearly all pupils have progressed into further education, work or apprenticeships.

A few issues were raised with the school leadership during the inspection relating to the strengthening of policy to reflect changes to Welsh legislation and current practice at the school. This work was completed suitably.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

The provision of information

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

New recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Strengthen planning for the progressive development of skills across the curriculum
- R2 Strengthen feedback to learners to support them to progress in their learning

Safeguarding

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

What happens next

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and support staff through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors/proprietor(s), leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school had taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body (where appropriate), information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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