

**20th March 2024 – For Immediate Release**

## **Summerhill School Celebrates Glowing Inspection Report**

The Government has approved a glowing inspection report on the world-renowned Summerhill School in Suffolk.

Nearly two and a half decades ago, following a threat of closure, the school was forced to take OFSTED to the Royal Courts of Justice where it successfully defended its unique ethos of "Freedom not Licence".

This latest inspection report from the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) gives a strong list of positive findings, and highlights welcome signs of improvement in areas of the school, which was founded in 1921 by A.S. Neill, one of the most significant educationalists of the millennium.

All-round praise was given to the standard of academic achievements, attitude to learning, social and emotional wellbeing, creativity, learning through play and a highly developed sense of right and wrong in pupils of all ages, made possible by a dedicated leadership team and staff.

Some of the key findings follow:

As a result of *"the individualised curriculum and well-planned teaching"* the report recognises that *"pupils develop into effective learners who produce work of a high standard"*.

Inspectors recognised the school's world-famous democratic principles and its distinctive approach to education, which give pupils *"a genuine voice in the running of the school and the maintenance of a just and fair community"*. They complimented the work of its leaders and staff, whose dedication successfully develops pupils' emotional intelligence and social awareness: *"Because of the individual attention they receive and the nurturing environment of a close-knit boarding community, pupils quickly become confident, self-aware young people."*

Noting the values of the school community and the significant personal freedom and choice afforded to pupils, the inspectors' report further went on to say that *"At the heart of the school's ethos is a determination to promote pupils' wellbeing by defending their right to make their own choices and grow at their own pace. In doing so, they ensure that pupils acquire the skills to make informed decisions about the paths they want to follow, both as learners and as members of the community."*

Principal Zoë Neill Readhead said *"I am immensely proud of the inspection report and I'm thrilled that, after 100 years of education based on free play, equality, democracy, community and mutual respect, Summerhill continues to be recognised as the leading, forward-thinking school that we see every day. I am so proud of the work that our professional team of staff, our incredible students and their parents, who place their trust in us, continue to put in to make our school the very special place that it is"*.

The inspection took place Nov 28-30, 2023 and the full report is available to read [here](#).

Summerhill is currently accepting new applicants for September 2024 and welcomes visits from prospective families. <https://www.summerhillschool.co.uk/>

ENDS

#### **Notes to Editors:**

The ISI is formally approved by the Secretary of State for Education to conduct inspections of independent schools in England.

Summerhill School, based in Leiston, Suffolk was founded in 1921 by the world-renowned educationalist A.S. Neill. It is an international boarding school for students aged 5-17. Summerhill operates on the principle of personal freedom, democracy and equality between adults and children. Students have absolute freedom to choose which formal lessons they attend; they design their own school curriculum. Conflict resolution and the creation of school rules are all discussed and voted on by the whole school community in regular meetings.

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Photos available on request.

