

Ofsted's accreditation visit to Nisai Virtual Academy Limited

On 10 and 11 December 2025, Ofsted visited Nisai Virtual Academy Limited as part of the [Online Education Accreditation Scheme](#). Through this scheme, providers of full-time online education to school-age children in England can apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for accreditation.

Ofsted visits providers to find out whether they meet the minimum standards for online education set by the DfE (the standards). This report sets out what we found during our visit on 10 and 11 December 2025. You can find out whether this provider is accredited by the DfE at [Get Information about Schools](#).

Key findings

- **Nisai Virtual Academy Limited does not meet all the minimum standards** for online education. More information on the standards that Nisai Virtual Academy Limited does not meet can be found in the last section of this report.
 - The provider does not meet 2 standards related to the quality of the curriculum because leaders do not currently provide pupils with physical education (PE) or aesthetic and creative education in sufficient depth. During the visit, leaders began to take action to address this matter. However, the schemes of work that they presented lacked the required detail and leaders could not demonstrate the effective implementation of them.
 - Despite the unmet standards, the provider has some significant strengths. For example, staff have highly positive relationships with parents and carers and pupils and, where relevant, secure substantial improvements to pupils' self-confidence and attitudes to learning. Furthermore, teachers have strong subject knowledge and use high-quality resources to deliver thoughtfully planned lessons. They make sure that pupils understand what they are learning, adapting the lessons to meet pupils' needs effectively.
 - The chair and members of the governing body generally demonstrate effective oversight of the provider, combining structured quality assurance, consistent challenge and active engagement with leaders. However, they have not ensured that all the standards are currently met.
-

Who is this online provider?

- Nisai Virtual Academy Limited is an established online education provider, which began operating in 2004. It provides an academic education for pupils aged 9 to 16 years, and for students aged 16 to 25 years who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Many pupils and students access their education at home, with some receiving education from the provider while attending their placing school. The provider's aim is to equip its pupils, a large proportion of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, with the skills they need to be as successful as possible.
- Nisai Virtual Academy Limited's operation centre is based in office accommodation in Stockton-on-Tees. Its head office is in Watford. All teaching staff deliver lessons from the premises in Stockton-on-Tees.
- For pupils of primary school age, Nisai Virtual Academy Limited offers a curriculum that is generally in line with the national curriculum. In the secondary and post-16 phases, pupils study towards functional skills, GCSE-, AS- and A-level qualifications. The curriculum includes English, mathematics, science, history and computing, as well as business studies and sociology in some age groups. However, for pupils of compulsory school age, the curriculum provision is incomplete, because there is no structured teaching of creative and aesthetic education or PE.
- Currently, 3 school-age pupils study with Nisai Virtual Academy Limited full time. All of these pupils have an [EHC plan](#). All 3 live in England. Another 74 school-age pupils study with Nisai Virtual Academy Limited part time.

How are pupils taught at Nisai Virtual Academy Limited?

- Lessons are taught live by teachers who are all based at the premises. Lessons are recorded to allow leaders to carry out quality assurance and to enable pupils to access lessons they may have missed through absence. Pupils receive lessons at home between 9am and 4pm each day, from Monday to Friday. The timetable includes a variety of curriculum subjects. There are also online sessions covering pupils' wellbeing and health, as well as a range of virtual clubs, such as book club, cookery club and creative club.
- The provision's online platform, designed in house, has a substantial array of functions and facilities. In addition to the range of communication methods described above, there are features such as an interactive whiteboard and a slide presentation tool. Teachers also have access to a 'one-page profile', which contains information about each pupil's needs and aptitudes. This feature provides effective support for teachers in planning and delivering the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Teachers have been well trained in how to use these resources.

- Teachers use assessment effectively to devise well-structured lessons that meet the needs of pupils. Teachers demonstrate deep subject knowledge. They frequently check on pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching to address any misconceptions. Teachers have audio and video facilities to communicate with and supervise pupils. However, staff communicate with many pupils using public and private chat functions because of pupils' needs related to mental health and anxiety issues. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and pupils behave well in lessons.
- There is a broad, though incomplete, range of subjects on offer at Nisai Virtual Academy Limited. In the post-16 age group, students can study for a variety of suitable qualifications, which are appropriate to their needs and abilities. These include functional skills awards, GCSEs, AS levels and A levels. The provider's overall approach to teaching, coupled with the high quality of resources, has a positive impact on pupils' confidence, engagement and learning progress. However, the curriculum provided for pupils of compulsory school age does not contain all the areas of learning required by the standards. Pupils do not study PE or subjects such as music or art and design in a deliberately structured way.

What are Nisai Virtual Academy Limited's arrangements like for keeping children safe?

- **Ofsted's visits to online providers can give only a limited level of assurance on the effectiveness of safeguarding, compared to our inspections of schools and other providers of face-to-face education and training.** However, we found that the arrangements for keeping children safe at Nisai Virtual Academy Limited are appropriate.
- There are suitable systems in place to report safeguarding concerns, and leaders and staff have received appropriate training. Staff report concerns to the designated lead for safeguarding, usually by email so there is a written record. Where appropriate, the designated lead alerts the commissioning school or the safeguarding team at the relevant local authority. There is an online recording system, which is up to date and detailed. Leaders respond promptly to concerns. Welfare and safeguarding are treated as the same category, with processes aligned.
- A suitable filtering and monitoring system is in place, which covers all devices, including those used by staff. The pupils' portal, by which pupils access the provider's online platform, has inbuilt filtering and monitoring, checking for actions such as instances of the use of prohibited language. There are daily reports of online activity by pupils, which are checked by the designated lead for safeguarding. Any concerns identified are shared with parents and the appropriate agency. Leaders set out terms and conditions to which commissioners of places must agree. These include ensuring that suitable equipment is in place. The provider's admissions policy requires that pupils follow a prescribed code of conduct and receive induction from the provider in the safe use of the online facilities.

- The provider's safeguarding policy is suitable and refers to the most recent guidance from the government. It is appropriately adapted to the context of online provision. Leaders make thorough checks on the suitability of staff and governors. The provider's risk assessment policy and procedures are fit for purpose. Leaders provide pupils and parents with substantial advice on safeguarding and online safety, which is available on the pupils' and parents' portals.

What do pupils and parents and carers think about Nisai Virtual Academy Limited?

- Parents who expressed opinions to the inspector were very complimentary about the provider. They appreciate, for example, the detail and frequency of communications from leaders and are pleased with their child's progress. They reported no instances of bullying and said that Nisai Virtual Academy Limited is a safe environment, where leaders give clear guidance about online safety. Positive comments received about the provider included, 'I have no hesitation in recommending them'.
- The inspector also received highly positive comments from pupils. They stated that they enjoy learning at the provider and that teachers make sure that the work matches pupils' needs and abilities. They used words such as 'fantastic' to describe Nisai Virtual Academy Limited, along with comments such as 'The lessons are excellent'.

About the visit

- This is Nisai Virtual Academy Limited's first accreditation visit. Mark Quinn HMI was the lead inspector.

Compliance with the DfE's standards for online education

This section lists the standards for online education set out by the DfE that Nisai Virtual Academy Limited does not meet. Where a standard is not listed, this is because Nisai Virtual Academy Limited meets the standard. If any of the standards do not apply to Nisai Virtual Academy Limited, these will be listed at the end.

The full list of standards can be found in [DfE's guidance on meeting the online education standards](#).

Section 1. Quality of education provided (curriculum)

Nisai Virtual Academy Limited is not meeting 2 standards related to the curriculum. This is because leaders do not have schemes of work for creative and aesthetic education and PE.

Pupils receive some exposure to these 2 subjects through clubs and wellbeing support. In each case, however, there is no planned curriculum that enables pupils to gain relevant knowledge in a suitably structured way.

The following standards in section 1 of the standards are therefore failed:

- **Standard 1.1** on the curriculum policy, plans and schemes of work
- **Standard 1.3** on content of the curriculum

Section 8. Quality of leadership in and management of the service

Leaders have not ensured that the standards are met consistently.

Nisai Virtual Academy Limited is not meeting 2 standards related to the curriculum. Leaders do not have suitably detailed schemes of work for creative and aesthetic education and PE.

The following standards in section 8 of the standards are therefore failed:

- **Standard 8.1** on those with leadership and management responsibilities at the provider demonstrating skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the standards are met consistently
- **Standard 8.2** on those with leadership and management responsibilities at the provider fulfilling their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met consistently

Standards that do not apply to this provider

The following standards do not apply to this provider:

- **Standard 5.8** only applies where a member of staff lives or has lived outside the UK
- **Standards 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.16, 5.17, 5.18** only apply where the provider uses supply staff
- **Standard 5.22** only applies if a proprietor lives or has lived outside the UK
- **Standards 6.5, 6.10** only apply where a report on the provider has been published under the Online Education Accreditation Scheme at the time of the visit

Contact details for Nisai Virtual Academy Limited

Person responsible for day-to-day running of the provider

Victoria Reaney

Address

Victoria House, Pearson Way, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6PT

Website

www.nisai.com

Telephone number

0208 424 8475

Email address

victoria.reaney@nisai.com

DfE unique reference number

152121

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026