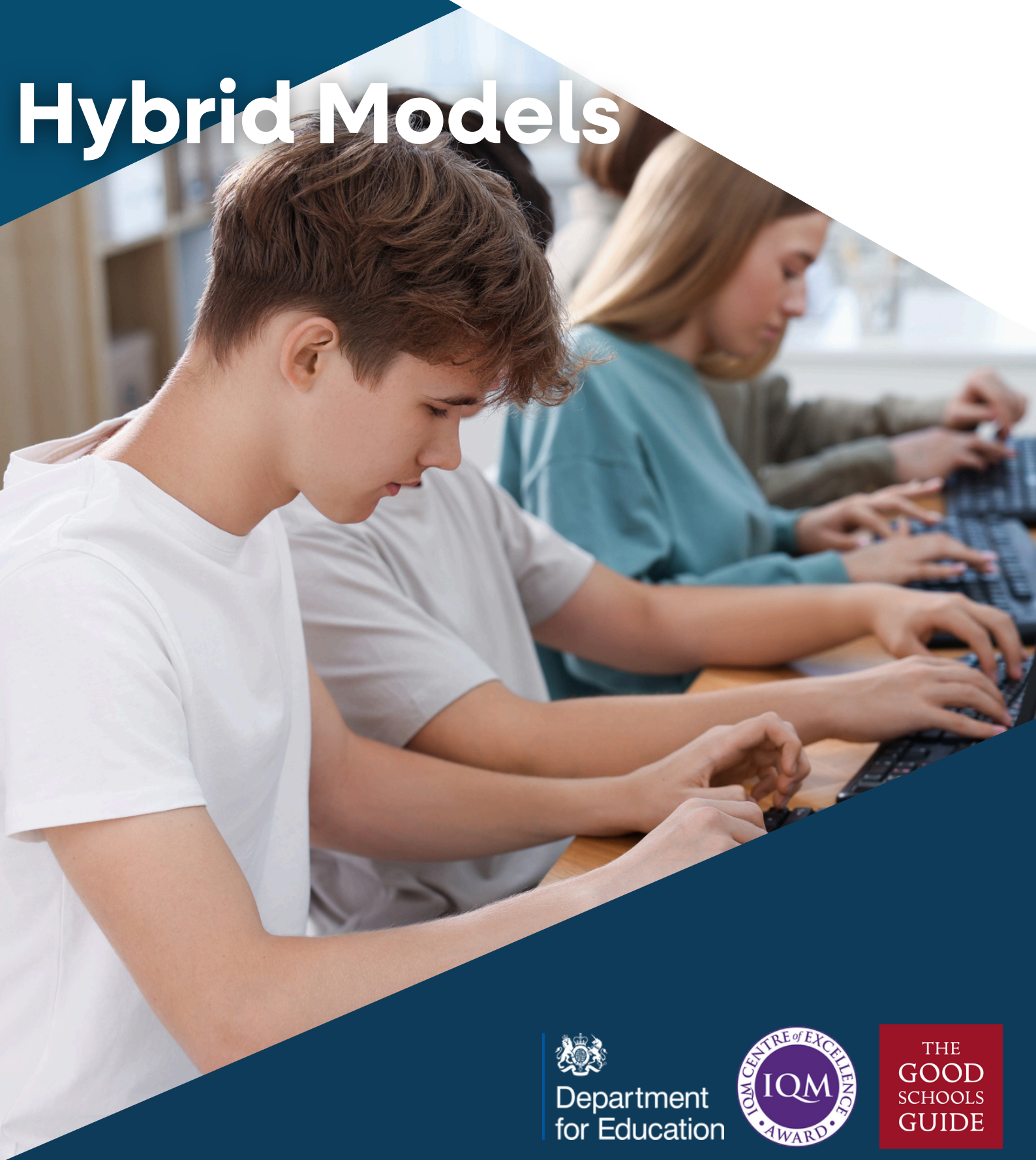
nisai® learning

Learn with us; together we can change the world

Hybrid Models



Department for Education

IQM CENTRE of EXCELLENCE AWARD

THE GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

Table of Contents

02 Welcome From Our Head of Teaching & Learning

03 Why The Need For Internal AP

04 Best Practices For Setting Up An Effective Internal AP

05 Why Partner With Nisai To Build An Internal AP Function

06 What A Nisai-Commissioned AP Pathway Is Designed To Achieve

07 Delivery Models You Can Commission

08 Mobilisation Playbook (0-30 Days)

09 Roles And Responsibilities

10 Case Study : School Turnaround Using Hybrid Delivery

11 Testimonials

Welcome From Our Head of Teaching & Learning

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to explore our approach to hybrid schooling.

Across the education sector, we are all navigating a period of rapid change. Schools, local authorities, and multi-academy trusts are being asked to meet increasingly diverse learner needs, often with limited resources, complex contexts, and rising expectations. Hybrid schooling offers a powerful opportunity to respond to these challenges in a way that is flexible, inclusive, and sustainable.

At Nisai, we believe that hybrid education is not about replacing traditional schooling, but about strengthening it. Our model blends high-quality online teaching with expert academic and pastoral support, enabling learners to remain connected to education wherever they are, and however they learn best. This approach has proven particularly effective for pupils who may be unable to attend full-time, require alternative provision, or benefit from a more personalised pathway.

We work in close partnership with schools, local authorities, and trusts to complement existing provision, extend capacity, and support continuity of learning. Whether the aim is reintegration, attendance improvement, SEND support, medical needs, or long-term alternative provision, our focus remains the same: delivering meaningful outcomes for learners while supporting the systems around them.

We will share how our hybrid model works in practice, the impact it delivers, and how it can be adapted to meet your local priorities. We look forward to exploring how, together, we can create flexible pathways that ensure every learner has access to high-quality education, regardless of circumstance.

Thank you for joining us.

Founded in
1996

Students in
30+
Countries

Partnering with over **135** Local Authorities in the UK

"Both innovative and inclusive, this professionally run 'no pressure' online school provides a beacon of hope to families whose children (most with SEND) have often given up hope of any education. A place where differences are celebrated, staff are happy and wellbeing is at the heart of everything they do. 'Nisai were the only ones to understand – our son finally felt seen,' said one mother."

The Good Schools Guide

THE GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

Lesley Laws

Head of Teaching & Learning

Accredited by

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Pearson | Edexcel Approved Online Centre

CAMBRIDGE International Education
Cambridge International School
Nisai Virtual Academy is a registered online Cambridge International School

IFIP

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IQM Centre of Excellence Award

Featured in:

The Guardian

THE GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

FE WEEK

TeessideLive

Why The Need For Internal AP

1. Rising Behaviour and Safety Challenges

- Increasing number of pupils with complex or challenging behaviour.
- Behaviour incidents can disrupt learning and compromise staff/pupil safety.
- Internal AP offers a safe, structured environment while keeping pupils on roll.

2. Complex SEND & SEMH Needs

- Mainstream classrooms often lack capacity for pupils with complex SEND including ASC, SEMH and EBSNA.
- Internal AP allows tailored interventions and personalised support.

3. Limited Access to External Services

- Long waits for CAMHS, speech and language therapy, or specialist placements.
- Internal AP acts as a bridge, ensuring pupils receive support while awaiting external services.

4. Preventing Exclusions & Improving Attendance

- Persistent absence, refusal to attend, or risk of exclusion threatens pupil outcomes.
- Internal AP reduces exclusions and keeps pupils engaged with education.

5. Staff Capacity & Expertise Gaps

- Mainstream staff may lack specialist training in trauma, SEMH, or behaviour management.
- Internal AP units often operate with smaller groups and specialist staff, improving engagement and outcomes.

6. Cost & Resource Pressures

- Outsourcing to external providers can be costly or limited locally.
- Internal AP allows schools to retain pupils and deliver support cost-effectively.

85%
of our UK students have an EHCP

27%
of our UK students have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition

69%
of our UK students have emotional or mental difficulties

Best Practices For Setting Up An Effective Internal AP

1. Clear Purpose & Leadership

- Define why the AP exists: behaviour support, SEMH, SEND, attendance recovery.
- Ensure senior leadership oversight (Headteacher, SENCO, or AP lead).
- Establish KPIs and success measures (attendance, engagement, behaviour incidents, academic progress).

2. Small, Structured and Safe Environment

- Smaller group sizes than mainstream classrooms.
- Predictable routines, clear rules, and consistent expectations.
- Dedicated space designed to minimise distractions and promote learning.

3. Skilled, Trained Staff

- Staff trained in trauma-informed practice, SEMH, behaviour management, and SEND.
- Use a mix of specialist teachers, teaching assistants, and pastoral staff.
- Provide ongoing CPD and reflective supervision to maintain quality.

4. Tailored Curriculum & Interventions

- Flexible timetables: combine core subjects, vocational options, and therapeutic support.
- Personalised learning plans aligned with pupil strengths, needs, and targets.
- Integrate social, emotional, and mental health interventions alongside academic learning.

5. Staff Capacity & Expertise Gaps

- Mainstream staff may lack specialist training in trauma, SEMH, or behaviour management.
- Internal AP units often operate with smaller groups and specialist staff, improving engagement and outcomes.
- Strong communication with parents, carers, and external agencies.

6. Continuous Monitoring & Evaluation

- Track academic progress, behaviour, attendance, and wellbeing.
- Regular reviews of each pupil's placement and interventions.
- Use data to adapt support, identify trends, and report impact to governors/MAT boards.

7. Integration with Mainstream School

- Ensure smooth reintegration into mainstream classes where possible.
- Maintain access to school events, trips, and peer groups to prevent isolation.
- Promote shared values and consistent expectations across AP and mainstream settings.

8. Strong Partnerships

- Collaborate with Local Authorities, external AP providers, CAMHS, and specialist SEND services.
- Regularly review external support to fill gaps and strengthen provision.
- Engage parents as partners in goal-setting and progress monitoring.

Nisai Learning Zone Operating Flow

1) Refer and start

- Referral confirmed (including risks and timetable needs).
- Start next morning for core subjects where required (refer by 4pm). (Subject to safeguarding checks and capacity)
- Access set-up and induction completed.

2) Teach, mentor and support

- Core curriculum delivered via live interactive lessons (<15 students; 30 minute lessons; recorded).
- Mentoring and pastoral support (in-person / remote) aligned to planned outcomes.
- Assistive technology and access arrangements supported (Units of Sound, WordQ, AAC where required).

3) Review and progress

- Weekly review of attendance, engagement and progress.
- Adjust package (timetable, mentoring, support) based on evidence.
- Transition plan: reintegration or progression to FE/HE/employment.

Why Partner With Nisai To Build An Internal AP Function

1. Proven Expertise in Alternative Provision

- Over 25 years supporting schools, MATs, and LAs in alternative education.
- Partner with over 135 Local Authorities.
- Deep experience with SEND, SEMH, ASC, EBSNA and behavioural interventions.
- Knowledge of OFSTED expectations and compliance requirements.

2. Tailored, Flexible Solutions

- Design and implement bespoke internal AP models aligned to your school's needs.
- Adaptable curricula, staffing models, and timetables to suit pupils and resource constraints.
- Flexible approach ensures pupils remain engaged, safe, and learning.

3. Staff Training & Development

- Specialist training for teachers and pastoral staff in:
  - Trauma-informed practice
  - Behaviour management
  - SEND, SEMH, ASC, EBSNA interventions
- Ongoing CPD and supervision to maintain high-quality provision.

4. Faster, Smarter Implementation

- Support from initial assessment to operational launch.
- Guidance on referral pathways, governance, and reporting.
- Minimise disruption to mainstream teaching while delivering immediate impact.

5. Measurable Outcomes & Reporting

- Tools to track attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, and academic progress.
- Regular reporting to governors, MAT boards, and LAs.
- Evidence-based approach to demonstrate success and secure long-term funding.

6. Strong Partnerships & Compliance

- Collaborate with local authorities, external AP providers, and specialist services.
- Ensure highest safeguarding compliance is embedded from day one.
- Reduce risk while creating a sustainable, high-impact AP function.

86%
of our UK students have a barrier to learning

59%
of our UK students have multiple barriers

96%
of our students successfully reintegrate back into mainstream, FE and employment

135+
Local Authorities supported across the UK

Quality assured
26x
this academic year by LAs and regulators

What A Nisai-Commissioned AP Pathway Is Designed To Achieve

Alternative Provision is most effective when it is commissioned as a time-bound pathway, not a place. The goal is to maintain curriculum continuity, reduce barriers to learning, stabilise attendance and engagement and move each learner towards a defined next step.

Who the pathway is for

Nisai's capabilities are designed to support learners who are **Disadvantaged, Disabled, Disengaged or Displaced.**

This includes learners with SEND and neurodiversity, emotional or mental health barriers, children missing education, persistent absence, exclusion risk, medical needs and learners whose circumstances require flexible learning.

Commissioning outcomes

- **Attendance** stabilisation and improvement (daily and weekly trend).
- **Engagement** in learning (session attendance, participation, task completion).
- **Academic continuity** in core subjects and agreed wider curriculum.
- **Improved readiness for reintegration** and/or sustained participation in a blended timetable.
- **Progression to a positive destination** (reintegration, FE/HE, employment/training).

The Nisai delivery core: what is different

- **Live, interactive teaching in small classes** (<15 students) with short focused lessons (30 minutes) and recorded sessions for flexibility.
- **Inclusive teaching** practices led by SEND-aware specialists using differentiation, adaptive strategies and digital tools.
- Wraparound **mentoring and pastoral support (in-person and remote),** aligned to wellbeing, attendance, and planned outcomes.
- **Structured progression support:** exams, qualifications and a Level 6 careers advisor, with UniFrog access.
- **Assistive technologies and communication options** (including Units of Sound, WordQ, and AAC where appropriate).

96%
of our students successfully reintegrate back into mainstream, FE and employment

Students on long-term courses achieve
84%
teacher assessed engagement in lessons

Delivery Models You Can Commission

Nisai supports three commissioning patterns. Many commissioners blend these models across a cohort, so that each learner receives an appropriate package without creating unnecessary complexity.

Model A: Nisai Learning Zone (on-site supervised access)

A supervised on-site space where learners access Nisai lessons and assigned work, supported by on-site staff and where required, Nisai mentors. This model is particularly effective where learners benefit from routine, safe supervision, and a structured bridge back into wider school life.

Model B: Hybrid day model (online core curriculum + on-site wraparound)

Nisai delivers core curriculum through live online lessons (and recordings for flexibility). The setting provides wraparound provision such as SEMH support, PSHE, enrichment, practical learning, wider curriculum and reintegration activity.

Model C: Flexible timetable (home and site blend)

Designed for learners with EBSNA, medical needs or significant anxiety barriers. Learners access live and recorded sessions to build confidence and consistency, while the setting uses planned in-person touchpoints to support gradual reintegration and social connection.

> *"The Nisai team are wonderful, so helpful and quick to respond to questions and always providing correct and thorough info. They are a pleasure to work with"*
>
> **SEND Manager – Cheshire East Council**

Learner is on-site but not accessing timetable consistently

Model A or B

- Provides structure and supervision while maintaining subject continuity
- Core lessons + supervised study + mentoring/wellbeing check-ins

Need to prevent escalation into higher-cost placements

Model B

- Maintains progress and stabilises participation with wraparound support
- Core curriculum + SEMH/PSHE + reintegration planning

EBSNA/medical barriers; learner is not ready for full-time on-site

Model C

- Reduces entry friction while building routine and confidence
- Short core lessons + mentoring + phased on-site sessions

LA wants visibility and spend control across multiple sites

Any (commissioned centrally)

- Supports LA-controlled requisition and consistent reporting
- Centrally agreed packages + standard KPIs and review cadence

Mobilisation Playbook (0-30 Days)

Commissioners and settings can mobilise quickly while keeping governance and safeguarding robust. The plan below is designed for immediate stabilisation, followed by improvement and transition.

Pre-start checklist (commissioning readiness)

- **Named AP lead and safeguarding link** (clear decision rights, escalation routes and review cadence).
- **Referral criteria and package bands agreed** (including expected duration and review points).
- **Data sharing and reporting expectations agreed** (attendance, engagement, progress, wellbeing).
- **Operational logistics confirmed:** location (if Learning Zone), supervision staffing, IT access, and timetable windows.
- **Learner list compiled with baseline information** (attendance history, needs, risks, EHCP status, access arrangements).

30-day implementation timeline

Mobilise
Day 0-5

Confirm cohorts and packages; set up access; complete induction; start core delivery (including next-morning start where required).

Outputs: *Learner timetable live; baseline captured; safeguarding and contacts confirmed.*

Stabilise
Day 6-15

Embed routine; deploy mentoring and pastoral support; ensure consistent participation in core lessons; start bridging activities.

Outputs: *Weekly dashboard trends; mentor notes; engagement levels established.*

Build
Day 16-25

Adjust packages using evidence; expand curriculum breadth as appropriate; address barriers; plan reintegration steps or longer-term blended plan.

Outputs: *Improving trend lines; curriculum continuity; clear next-step plan.*

Transition
Day 26-30

Implement phased reintegration and/or progression route; agree ongoing support; confirm destination readiness activities (careers, exams).

Outputs: *Transition plan; review outcomes; commissioning decision for continuation or step-down.*

Roles And Responsibilities

Role	Accountabilities	Typical weekly cadence
Commissioner / MAT, LA Lead	Approves packages and spend; sets performance expectations; ensures multi-site consistency; supports escalation routes.	Half-termly commissioning review; weekly exception reporting.
Setting AP Lead	Referrals and gatekeeping; on-site routine and supervision; reintegration planning; liaison with families and DSL.	Weekly AP panel and safeguarding check; daily operational oversight.
Nisai Delivery Team	Live teaching, recordings, marking/feedback; mentoring and pastoral support; reporting and review participation.	Daily attendance reports; non-attendance alerts; real time topic progress reports, assignment scores and status. Case discussion as required.

"Our students thrive in the Nisai Online Learning Zone. The blend of live online lessons and in-person support has given them confidence, consistency, and real progress. It's one of the most impactful interventions we've introduced."

Deputy Headteacher, Partner School

96%

of our students successfully reintegrate back into mainstream, FE and employment

Outcomes, Reporting And Assurance

Commissioners need visibility that is timely, consistent and actionable. Nisai's model combines quantifiable metrics with structured pastoral insight, so decisions are driven by evidence rather than anecdote.

Review cadence (recommended)

- **Weekly:** operational review (attendance, engagement, risks, barriers, package fit).
- **Half-termly:** impact review (KPI trends, case studies, cost and value-for-money considerations).
- **Termly:** strategic review (cohort patterns, reintegration/destination outcomes, service development).

Quality assurance and safeguarding (what commissioners can expect)

- **Teachers are safeguarding-focused,** supported by mandatory safeguarding and compliance training.
- **Regular CPD and observations** support consistent teaching quality.
- **Accreditation with major exam boards** supports reliable qualifications pathways.
- A **robust QA framework** underpins delivery and continuous improvement.
- A **designated Data Protection Officer** function supports GDPR compliance and information security.

Case Study: School Turnaround Using Hybrid Delivery

Specialist setting : stabilising teaching capacity, improving inspection outcomes and strengthening examination participation through a Nisai commissioned hybrid model.

Challenge:

- Context: small specialist secondary provision with high levels of complex SEND needs (ASC and SEMH) and disrupted prior learning.
- Key risks: inconsistent subject-specialist capacity, gaps in English/maths foundations, variable engagement and KS4 outcome volatility.
- Improvement imperative: rapid, evidenced gains needed in safety/routine, teaching quality and outcomes.

Outcomes evidenced through inspection monitoring

- Culture and safety: inspection monitoring described a calmer, orderly environment with improving relationships and better attendance.
- Teaching: more structured lessons, raised expectations and better use of individual learning plans; current pupils made stronger progress.
- KS4 participation: the Year 11 cohort attended all examinations – a meaningful step-change for a high-need group.
- Inspection trajectory: later inspection confirmed the setting no longer required special measures, evidencing sustained improvement.

"Partnering with Nisai enabled us to keep our pupils engaged in learning, enhancing their safety and personalising the curriculum to meet need. The impact was transformational, including zero suspensions and 100% of Year 11 pupils completing their end of key stage 4 examinations".

Headteacher of School

Solution:

- Hybrid core delivery: live online teaching for English and mathematics (plus other subjects where commissioned) with supervised on-site study and wraparound routines.
- Mobilise fast: baseline capture, timetable and access arrangements agreed upfront; start of delivery within days.
- Teach and mentor: small live classes, recorded sessions for flexibility, regular feedback, mentor check-ins to remove barriers and rebuild habits.
- Assurance: weekly operational review; half-termly progress vs baseline; termly strategic review to prevent drift.

Transferable best-practice lessons

- Stability first: predictable routines and clear roles across a time-bound pathway (mobilise - stabilise - build - transition).
- Capacity solved: consistent specialist-led core delivery protected curriculum continuity during staffing turbulence.
- Commissioner-ready data: minimum KPI set (attendance, engagement, progress, wellbeing/barriers, destination status) enabled timely, actionable oversight.

Testimonials

"My son studied for 4 years in Nisai, from his IGCSEs to his A Levels, and they were some of our most enjoyable years of schooling..."

P. Briccocola (parent)

"Excellent school especially for my daughter who has Contamination OCD, ASC, depression and anxiety...Nisai is an invaluable option for the education of some children who would otherwise be excluded, become NEET and miss the opportunity to achieve their potential due to their illnesses, or neurodiversity. Long may it continue!"

Sam (parent)

"Staff at Nisai have their learners at the centre of all they do. It is a setting of hope and aspiration. An organisation that is dedicated to developing and enhancing inclusive practice..."

IQM Evaluation

"Nisai have been a brilliant alternative education provider when our son was too ill to attend a mainstream school...Nisai supported us as parents, too...Our son was able to achieve the qualifications he needed to move on and go to college...It was absolutely brilliant to watch him achieve so much with the help of Nisai. Thank you - we will always be grateful to the whole staff team at Nisai for their care and support."

G Cummins (parent)

"I cannot speak more highly of Nisai. They have absolutely transformed the life of my son and our whole family..."

A. Ellerton (parent)

"Leadership and management at Nisai are outstanding — a visionary, pupil-centred team turning strategy into practice, driving continuous improvement, and fostering an inclusive culture where every learner can thrive."

Graeme Pyle – School Improvement Partner

"All at Nisai have been exemplary in supporting my daughter both professionally and with empathy for her condition. She has enjoyed her learning and has prospered well in an anxiety free learning environment...."

T McDevitt (parent)

"I had lessons online due to my autism and ADHD. We also did lesson about everyday life and learning basic skills like cooking. I never used to leave the house. Since being with Nisai I am now prepared for college and the rest of my future."

N Byrne (student)

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Learn with us; together we can change the world

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