

Inspection of Wargrave House School

449 Wargrave Road, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside WA12 8RS

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at Wargrave House School. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, feel safe and settled. Parents and carers speak highly of the school. A typical comment was: 'The staff are there for you every step of the way.'

Pupils respond well to leaders' high expectations. Leaders focus exceptionally well on preparing pupils and students for adulthood. Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects.

Pupils told inspectors that bullying does not happen in the school. They said that staff would deal with any signs of bullying quickly and effectively. Pupils behave very well in and out of lessons. Over time, their behaviour improves considerably. The behaviour of students in the sixth form is exemplary. They are highly respectful and polite to staff, friends and visitors.

Pupils and students learn to become active, responsible citizens. Students in the sixth form enjoy aspirational and well-planned work experience opportunities. These include working at the on-site 'cosy corner' café. Student councillors discuss ways to improve the school with senior leaders.

Pupils benefit from a plethora of experiences. These include mixed martial arts, climbing and a Makaton choir. A wide range of educational trips, such as visits overseas and to art exhibitions and museums, further enrich the curriculum.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They have thought carefully about what they want pupils and students to learn. Pupils' and students' knowledge builds in a logical way. Teachers make sure learning is revisited often. This helps pupils and students to remember the curriculum.

Staff deliver the curriculum well. They are particularly skilled in supporting pupils and students with autism spectrum disorder. Leaders and staff work closely with on-site therapists. This helps staff to identify any emerging or changing special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, staff adapt their approaches to meet pupils' needs effectively.

In lessons, teachers use assessment strategies well. They spot when any pupil is struggling and work quickly to ensure that suitable support is put in place. This helps to reduce the chance that pupils will form misconceptions.

Leaders' checks help staff to consider how to deliver the curriculum for each pupil. However, in some subjects, checks do not identify whether pupils have remembered the important knowledge identified in the curriculum. This means that teachers do

not have the information they need to ensure that pupils' prior knowledge is built on as well as it should be. This is not the case in the sixth form. Here, leaders' checks on students' learning are linked closely to the well-designed curriculum.

Leaders promote communication and reading well throughout the school. Skilled staff deliver the phonics programme in a systematic way. However, at times, the books that pupils read do not match closely to the sounds that they securely know. This hinders some pupils' confidence and progress.

Leaders have ensured that older pupils, including students in the sixth form, continue to develop their reading skills. Pupils read widely and often. In the sixth form, staff deliver the reading curriculum in a highly effective way that focuses on students' preparation for adulthood. For example, students read from recipes while preparing food. Most pupils and students become fluent readers.

Leaders and staff are extremely well-skilled in managing pupils' complex behaviours. For example, staff work quickly and effectively when pupils become upset. This means that the learning of others is not disrupted. Pupils understand the clear school rules and routines. They understand that their teachers expect them to return to learning when they are settled. Staff's caring and highly effective approach improves pupils' behaviour dramatically over time. This is evident in the excellent behaviour and attitudes demonstrated by students in the sixth form.

An extensive range of activities contribute strongly to pupils' personal development. Pupils raise money for a range of charities and learn to value diversity. Leaders promote the protected characteristics effectively. Staff do this in a way that is highly appropriate for pupils' individual needs. For example, staff ensure that pupils learn about LGBT relationships in a considered way. Pupils learn how to manage their finances well and practise these skills on well-planned visits to shops in the community. Careers education is of a high quality. Pupils and students learn extensively about the options available to them beyond school. Leaders work with a wide range of employers to provide supportive and engaging work experience opportunities. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for future education, employment or training.

Governors hold leaders to account and offer effective support and challenge. Most staff reported that leaders and governors are approachable, supportive and consider their workload carefully.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular, useful training such as how to recognise any signs of neglect. Staff know how to report concerns. When required, leaders involve other agencies quickly. This means that pupils and their families receive appropriate support.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn how to swim confidently and how to use public transport safely. Teachers ensure that older pupils learn about the risks of drugs, alcohol and smoking. When the time is right, pupils receive supportive sex and relationships education. Staff deliver this in a way that reflects each pupils' individual needs effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, the books pupils read are not closely matched to the sounds that they know. This causes some pupils to lose confidence and slows their progress. Leaders should make sure that pupils read books that closely match the sounds that they securely know.
- In some subjects, leaders have not ensured that teachers and staff check how well pupils have remembered the knowledge outlined in the curriculum. This means that teachers do not always have the most useful information to adapt the curriculum for pupils' future learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the information that they need to allow pupils to build new knowledge successfully on what they already know.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	134888
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10212239
Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	11
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vivienne Beecroft
Headteacher	Stuart Jamieson
Website	www.wargravehouse.com
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils in this school have SEND. The school provides education for pupils and students with autism.
- All pupils and students in the school have an education, health and care plan.
- There have been no significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and expressive arts and design. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed students' and pupils' work and spoke to teachers, students and pupils.
- Inspectors also met with the leaders for physical education and personal, social and health education, reviewed pupils' work and evaluated the curriculums.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. The lead inspector spoke to the headteacher and senior leaders throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also met with the chief executive officer of the Wargrave House charity.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. Inspectors considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. They observed pupils during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with pupils.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to the staff's and pupils' surveys.

Inspection team

Adam Sproston, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sheldon Logue

Ofsted Inspector

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 <http://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 2022