

Nugent House School

Carr Mill Road, Billinge, Wigan, Lancashire WN5 7TT

Inspection dates

4–6 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- A passion drives the principal to ensure that pupils are safe, well looked after and achieving well at Nugent House School. Together with senior leaders, governors and the proprietor, the principal has maintained standards, and improved further the quality of teaching, since the previous inspection.
- Pupils benefit from an imaginative curriculum, which captures their interests and is tailored to their specific educational needs.
- The quality of teaching is good and teachers are keen to improve. Senior leaders are exploring opportunities for teachers to learn from excellent practice in other schools.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and mentors know pupils exceptionally well. They work together effectively to help pupils with their learning.
- Trustees and governors challenge senior leaders. Together with leaders, they ensure that all independent school standards are met.
- Parents are positive about the school. They say their children are safe and achieving well.
- The attendance of almost all pupils improves during their time at Nugent House School, as does their behaviour. Various therapies give pupils an insight into their behaviour and the consequences of their actions.
- Pupils' progress, including in English, mathematics and science, is good. However, the best practice in monitoring pupils' progress is yet to be shared across the school.
- Systems for assessing pupils' abilities on entry to the school are not yet fully implemented.
- At the end of Year 11 in 2016, outcomes for pupils were good. This includes in GCSEs and vocational courses in subjects such as music, design technology, art and food technology.
- All aspects of post-16 provision are good. Safeguarding is effective, as it is in key stages 2, 3 and 4, and for the primary nurture group.
- Pupils' knowledge of the culturally diverse nature of British society is still developing.
- Representatives from local authorities say they receive helpful feedback on pupils' personal, social and academic development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing a shared system to accurately baseline pupils' skills and abilities on entry to the school
 - sharing the best practice, in subjects such as music and design technology, in assessing pupils' performance across the school and in all subjects
 - providing opportunities for teachers to visit other schools, learn from best practice and enhance their teaching skills
 - developing pupils' knowledge and appreciation of the culturally diverse nature of British society.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal of Nugent House School is determined to ensure that pupils achieve to the very best of their ability, enjoy their time at school and continue to develop in confidence. The principal has made rapid and significant changes over the first full year of her tenure. Quite rightly, her focus has been on improving the quality of teaching and ensuring that all staff are accountable for pupils' achievement, welfare and personal development.
- Together with her new head of school, the principal has consolidated the senior leadership team. With the full support of governors and the proprietor, senior leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust, teaching and learning are good and all independent school standards are met.
- Most staff are of the view that the school has improved since the previous inspection. They say that training and professional development opportunities have helped to support them in improving their practice. A small core of staff are less positive and feel that recent changes have adversely impacted the school. However, the overwhelming majority of staff who met with the inspector know exactly what senior leaders are aiming to achieve and fully support the school's improvement plans.
- The principal has implemented a rigorous system of performance management, which clearly sets out what each member of staff is expected to achieve, and includes precise timescales for actions to be taken. Performance management outcomes are closely linked to the school's priorities, particularly those which aim to raise standards, improve the quality of teaching and develop middle leaders.
- Pupils enjoy learning and mostly engage with the school's wide and varied curriculum. This ensures their good progress in different subjects. Teachers and support staff are skilled at harnessing the interests of pupils, many of whom have significant gaps in their learning, having missed extended periods of education.
- All pupils study art, food technology, science and physical education. Music is taught across the school and, together with horticulture, forms an important part of the school's therapeutic programme. Writing and mathematics are promoted well across the curriculum, as is reading, particularly in the primary nurture group.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a keen sense of social responsibility and an empathy with those less fortunate than themselves. They regularly raise money for various charities and recently participated in raising funds for Children in Need and Red Nose Day, and organised a Grenfell Tower charity day. Pupils enjoy playing piano, string and various percussion instruments, and listening to orchestral performances at the Liverpool Philharmonic.
- Pupils' appreciation of most aspects of British values is good. They have a highly developed sense of social justice and enjoy sharing their views, which they recently did in relation to proposals for improving post-16 provision. However, their knowledge, appreciation and respect of the culturally diverse nature of British society is not as strong as it should be.
- The school works well with other schools and organisations within Nugent, particularly in relation to sharing safeguarding and human resources expertise. In their aim to

continually improve, senior leaders have sought external views of the quality of provision. Currently, leaders are working with a school improvement partner from a local authority. The school is receiving support on various aspects of planning, which is helping senior leaders to fine-tune strategies to further improve the quality of teaching and learning.

- Current systems for assessing pupils' skills and abilities on entry to school are not fully effective in ensuring that teachers have the most accurate view of pupils' starting points. Leaders recognise that this is of paramount importance. Leaders have made it a priority for development to ensure that teaching is closely matched to pupils' needs so that pupils make the best possible progress. Teachers are highly appreciative of the training opportunities afforded by the principal, particularly in relation to them gaining qualified teacher status. Currently, there are few opportunities for teachers to improve their practice through working with more experienced teachers in other schools and settings.

Governance

- The principal ensures that governors are well-informed and aware of developments and improvements taking place at the school. Minutes of meetings indicate that governors meet on a regular basis to consider, and give their advice on, a wide range of issues. These include plans to work in partnership with external educational specialists, the current review of post-16 provision and new performance management arrangements.
- As with other parts of the organisation, the governing body has recently been restructured to include additional members, including a new chair of the governing body. Governors have been carefully selected for their expertise and experience in areas including education and local government, which they bring to bear in their advisory capacity.
- In addition to support from governors, the principal and senior leaders meet with trustees on a regular basis to discuss finance and human resource issues, as well as leaders' commissioning success and work with local authorities. All pupils are in the care of various local authorities and attract additional funding. Trustees ensure that such funding is spent appropriately to support pupils' academic, personal and social development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is stringent, as it needs to be given the highly vulnerable nature of most pupils. Rigorous checks are carried out on all staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.
- Expertise is shared between the various schools and organisations within Nugent; this ensures that all staff are up to date with their training and conversant with the latest government advice on keeping children safe in education. All staff are familiar with guidelines on protecting pupils from terrorism and extremism and have had 'Prevent' training. In addition, most staff are familiar with safer recruitment practices and procedures for restraining pupils who are a danger to themselves, other pupils and staff.
- The school's safeguarding policy and procedures are suitable, up to date, available to parents and published on its website.
- All independent school standards relating to health and safety, fire safety and building

checks and regulations are closely adhered to. Risk assessments are in place to cover every eventuality relating to school trips and visits and safety in school. All pupils have individual risk assessments, which all appropriate staff are aware of.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection; in some areas it has improved, as teachers have enhanced their skills and acquired qualified teacher status.
- Teachers know pupils very well. They plan activities which ensure pupils' engagement and their good progress. Most pupils learn in groups of less than five; many receive one-to-one support to meet their specific learning needs. Classroom management is good, as it needs to be, given that some pupils find it difficult to concentrate for more than short periods.
- Teaching assistants and mentors are trained well and form effective partnerships with teachers. Together they are highly attuned to pupils' behaviour, which can be unpredictable. Staff usually identify 'flash points' and know how to implement de-escalation strategies.
- Mathematics teaching is good. This was demonstrated in a class where the teacher skilfully engaged pupils in a data gathering and analysis activity. The teacher hooked pupils in by showing a short video of different coloured, and numbered, cars passing across the screen. Pupils were encouraged to tally the number of cars and discuss concepts such as frequency, range and median.
- In English, teachers are not afraid to bring lessons to life by adding drama. This was exemplified in a class where the teacher asked pupils to identify what had changed about her, after going out of the room and removing a ring, to demonstrate the importance of paying attention to detail. This was linked to the skill of comprehension, and retrieving salient information from a text. Pupils then demonstrated their understanding through answering questions on a poem about a homeless person.
- During the inspection, most classrooms were calm and purposeful places. This was the case in a science class, where pupils were learning about different forces. Pupils demonstrated their curiosity and willingness to participate as they tested the resistance of a shoe on a rough surface. They then observed what happened when they tried to attract magnets with the same, and opposite, poles.
- All teachers follow the school's assessment and feedback policy. Teachers check pupils' work regularly and give them good advice on how to improve it. Where pupils' writing skills are weak, teachers write from pupils' dictation. Pupils' books clearly indicate such support when it is given. The quality of some pupils' work is poor. However, workbooks indicate that pupils' presentation improves over time as they gain confidence in writing and improve their grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The quality and usefulness of assessment procedures vary across the school. For example, in design technology a skills matrix has been developed to assess pupils' ability to use, and master, different tools, ranging from level 3, ability to use a coping saw, to level 7, ability to use a centre lathe. Similarly, in music, a fully developed system and curriculum is in place to assess pupils' competencies in using a range of different string,

keyboard and percussion instruments. These systems are not fully implemented in other subjects. As a result, teachers are not always as precise as they need to be about the progress pupils make in different areas of learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff at Nugent House School pay close attention to each pupil's individual circumstances and needs. Staff are fully aware of the risk assessments attached to each pupil and the details of pupils' education, health and care plans.
- Therapy plays an important part in the education of all pupils. The school's special educational needs coordinator works with the school educational psychologist, and other partners, to provide a 'menu' of tailored therapies. As well as cognitive and massage therapy, the school offers horticultural therapy. Younger pupils who met with the inspector said that they enjoy therapy and would like even more massage and play therapy sessions.
- The school has compelling evidence that such therapies work effectively to help pupils to manage their behaviour and feelings, and support their engagement in learning. During the inspection, the school's extensive gardens were visited. Here, pupils have their own 'patch' where they tend sweetcorn, peas and beans, within a tranquil environment under the supervision of experienced gardeners. Pupils are quite rightly proud of their achievements and the fruits of their labour.
- Pupils who spoke with the inspector said they feel safe most of the time, because their teachers and friends make them feel safe. They indicated that sometimes pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour 'kick off'. However, pupils also said that such incidents were always dealt with effectively.
- Pupils have restricted access to the internet. They are aware of the reasons, and necessity, to limit online use to educational activities. Pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet. They are aware that cyber bullying can happen on laptops, computers, games consoles and mobile phones. Pupils know not to talk to strangers or share personal information over the internet. All who talked with the inspector agreed that under no circumstances should they make actual contact with anyone they meet virtually.
- Pupils know how to stay healthy. They visit the local gym and enjoy swimming. All engage in physical education lessons. Through the personal, social, health and emotional aspects of the curriculum, pupils learn about the dangers of alcohol, smoking and taking illegal drugs.
- All pupils dine together, with most staff. This supports the development of their interpersonal communication skills and appreciation of social etiquette. Pupils select their daily meals from an excellent menu of healthy foods, prepared and cooked by highly trained catering staff.

Behaviour

- Pupils' behaviour is good.
- Staff take a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. They aim to support pupils and empower them with strategies to manage their own behaviour. Most pupils are developing their resilience to persevere and learn from their mistakes. For many this is a slow, but steady, process.
- Senior leaders have recently changed the school's policy on dealing with unacceptable behaviour, emphasising the importance of staff challenging poor behaviour in the classroom, rather than relying on withdrawing pupils from lessons. Observations of behaviour in class and around the school indicate that this approach is effective. Most staff are of the view that behaviour is good.
- Pupils are appreciative of the school's exceptionally well-kept fields, gardens and buildings, which the majority consistently respect. Pupils who spoke with the inspector said that one of the things they like most about the school is 'the environment'. Pupils usually behave sensibly when moving around the school. Adults are always at hand to ensure that pupils observe the rules.
- Pupils behave sensibly during lunchtimes and during physical education activities, where they usually listen carefully and follow instructions closely. During the inspection, the school was calm and purposeful.
- The school monitors pupils' attendance rigorously. The attendance of almost all pupils has improved since starting the school. Where attendance is still low, it has improved markedly for pupils who previously refused to go to school, or attended rarely. The school values attendance highly and recognises and rewards pupils for coming to school regularly.
- Pupils say that bullying sometimes happens in school, but indicate that it is dealt with appropriately. They are confident in reporting any concerns to staff. Parents who spoke with the inspector are of the view that behaviour in school is good, indicating that their children's behaviour has been 'transformed'. Typically, parents say that mainstream schools failed to understand their children, unlike at Nugent House, where staff know their children well.
- Pupils enjoy coming together for assemblies. This was exemplified when pupils gathered to 'keep calm and keep British'. After giving their views on democracy and the rule of law, pupils agreed that honesty, hard work and caring were good values and that rudeness, laziness and lack of consideration for others were not. At the end of the discussion, pupils gave the thumbs up to indicate that they had understood and enjoyed the assembly.
- Pupils are aware of various forms of discriminatory language, including racist language, which they say is 'when you offend someone because they are Black, or because of where they are from'. Pupils indicate that discriminatory language is sometimes used, but always challenged by staff, when they hear it. The school's behaviour log contains examples of such rare incidents, which are dealt with appropriately.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Almost all pupils make good progress, from their low starting points on entry to the school. This includes in reading, writing, mathematics, science and a range of other subjects.
- At the end of Year 11 in 2016, a small number of pupils attained 'good' GCSEs in English, mathematics, science and art; all were graded. However, GCSEs are only one of many measures of success. The school offers an extensive suite of qualifications, including short courses, and is consistently striving to identify new and innovative ways to acknowledge pupils' achievement.
- Almost all pupils in key stage 4 have attained entry-level qualifications in English. These include functional skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. In mathematics, they were successful in gaining qualifications at entry level and functional skills levels 1 and 2. The workbooks of pupils in key stages 2, 3 and 4 indicate that their skills improve considerably as they are consolidated with good teaching over time.
- The most able pupils make at least good progress in art at both GCSE, and A level. In art, teachers encourage pupils to take pride in their work, explore different creative styles and express themselves freely. This approach is highly effective in developing pupils' resilience and perseverance, and results in the production of outstanding pieces of art work.
- Pupils enjoy reading, particularly in key stage 2 and the primary nurture group, where they have access to a good range of reading materials. Teachers are highly effective in getting pupils to read with expression and use their imagination to describe characters and settings. As a result, pupils make good progress in this subject.
- All pupils study music. Teachers encourage pupils to pursue their interests and focus on nurturing pupils' talents. Finely tuned assessment procedures enable teachers to accurately chart pupils' progress and record their achievements. Many pupils play drums, guitars and keyboards competently and perform in the school band. Some have been externally graded to a high standard.
- Almost all pupils regularly participate in food technology classes and achieve national vocational qualifications up to level 2 in this subject. The school takes advantage of its high-quality head cook and has recently devised a bespoke level 3 qualification for a small number of pupils.
- In key stage 3 and 4 pupils make at least good progress in design technology. They have produced outstanding, imaginative pieces of work in this subject, including bird boxes and dog kennels. Pupils have also used digital modelling to create unique designs for skateboards.
- Pupils can excel in computing and digital technology, used in music to compose and record their own compositions, and in art to create unique patterns and designs.
- Senior leaders and teachers provide a flexible curriculum tailored to individual pupils' interests, skills and abilities. This ensures that the most able can, and do, achieve good GCSEs, and the basic skills they need in English and mathematics, while excelling in subjects of their choice.
- The skills and abilities that pupils gain during their time at the school prepare them well for the next stage of their learning, both in the school's post-16 provision and in various

colleges and organisations.

Sixth form provision

Good

- All aspects of post-16 provision, including leadership and management and the quality of teaching, are good. At the time of the inspection, a small group of learners were taking advantage of post-16 provision. Most have elected to come back into Year 12, having achieved well in Year 11.
- The prospectus for post-16 provision states, 'we offer a comprehensive programme of qualifications which enable older learners to make the transition between school and employment or progression onto traineeships, apprenticeships or study in further or higher education'.
- Learners who met with the inspector indicated that they are happy with the curriculum and the support afforded to them to pursue careers in areas such as plumbing and software design. Senior leaders support learners wanting to pursue professional careers to become, for example, teaching assistants.
- In addition to the core curriculum of English, mathematics and life skills, learners have access to a range of additional courses including art, music, food technology, design technology and drama.
- Learners benefit from regular, impartial careers advice. Those who spoke with the inspector were well informed and indicated that they have a wide range of study and career options.
- Staff establish learners' interests through interviews. Thereafter, personalised timetables are produced. Typically, timetables include off-site provision in local further education colleges. All learners are offered support in writing personal statements and applications for colleges, work placements and jobs.
- The school keeps records of learners' destinations; these show that post-16 provision realises its objectives. Almost all go into education, employment or training. Over the last three years most learners have gained places at various colleges to study a broad range of courses, some have gone on to apprenticeships, joined the army or gained employment.
- Learners who spoke with the inspector said that they feel safe. They appreciate being treated as young adults and enjoy the independence, trust and responsibility afforded to them. Learners said that they feel cared for, behaviour is good and staff supportive.
- Learners indicated that occasionally discriminatory language is used around the school. The same stringent safeguarding procedures in operation in the primary nurture group, and key stage 2, 3 and 4, are in operation in post-16 provision.
- At the time of the inspection, post-16 provision was being reorganised. Inspection evidence indicates that at the beginning of the next academic year, learners will continue to benefit from good, safe provision, with good learning resources and leisure facilities.

School details

Unique reference number	104839
DfE registration number	342/6004
Inspection number	10008860

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Proprietor	Nugent
Chair	Sarah Johnson
Headteacher	Carol Parkinson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000
Telephone number	01744 892551
Website	www.nugenthouse.co.uk
Email address	nugent.house@nugentcare.org
Date of previous inspection	18–20 March 2013

Information about this school

- By the end of the inspection, the school met the statutory requirements for the publication of information on its website.
- Nugent House School is situated in a village near Wigan. The school opened in 1983 and is part of the Nugent organisation.
- At Nugent House School, key stages 2, 3 and 4 pupils, and learners in post-16 provision, study a wide range of subjects and are entered for various qualifications, including

GCSEs. 'The school prides itself on providing a holistic approach to education by preparing pupils for all the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Through this supportive environment, children can begin to develop self-respect and self-confidence.'

- Specialist nurture provision is available to all pupils when needed, as is a variety of therapies, including music, art, massage, horticulture and cognitive behaviour therapy. A small number of key stage 2 pupils attend the primary nurture group.
- The school caters for 42 pupils. All pupils have education, health and care plans. Most pupils are in the care of local authorities. The vast majority of pupils come to the school having missed significant periods of education and with poor skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school works with several colleges and other external training providers to arrange placements for pupils and learners in the post-16 provision.
- Several staff have been appointed since the previous inspection, including a principal, head of school, an assistant headteacher and a special educational needs coordinator. In addition, a number of mentors, teaching assistants and teachers have joined, and left, the school.
- At the time of the inspection the school, and Nugent, were going through structural changes, including changes to staff remits and line management. The post of chair of governors to the school has recently been filled.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils in various lessons, including English, mathematics, science, music, design technology, horticulture and physical education.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised during lessons and separately. Meetings were held with the principal, head of school and various staff. These included the special educational needs coordinator, a group of staff, including teaching assistants and mentors, and teachers responsible for English, mathematics and science. A meeting was held with a Nugent director of operations.
- Telephone conversations took place with representatives from three placing authorities and two parents. Two meetings were held with pupils, one with a group of key stage 2 and 3 pupils, the other with a group of learners from the post-16 provision. A letter was received from the school's improvement partner.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, to be considered. The inspector scrutinised the school's own surveys of pupils' views. Responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 30 members of staff were also considered.
- The inspector examined a range of documents. These included the school's reviews of its own performance, information on pupils' achievement, various safety and safeguarding policies and procedures and records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 www.gov.uk/ofsted.

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 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017