

Inspection of Nugent House School

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

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 April 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who spoke with inspectors explained that they feel safe and happy at Nugent House School. Warm relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils feel comfortable to share any concerns. Pupils told inspectors that teachers will give them support if they have any worries.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, show improved behaviour when they become part of this school. Pupils know teachers' expectations and do their best to follow the rules. Pupils improve their understanding of the importance of taking responsibility for their behaviour. They told inspectors that staff manage behaviour well. Bullying happens infrequently, but when it does, leaders respond quickly and effectively.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard. Pupils benefit from the support that staff give them to overcome any difficulties. Most pupils go on to gain qualifications in English, mathematics and other subjects. This helps them with their next steps when they leave the school.

Outside the classroom, pupils take part in activities such as sports tournaments. They also enjoy caring for and learning about the animals that are kept on the school site. Pupils go on educational trips. For example, they visit a cathedral as part of finding out about a range of different religions.

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

The curriculum that leaders have designed is broad and ambitious. Leaders have a sharp focus on providing all pupils with knowledge and experiences that will enable them to make their way in the world when they have finished school. This includes providing pupils in the sixth form with opportunities to gain a range of qualifications to prepare them for work and adult life. Leaders have structured the curriculum well to build up pupils' knowledge over time in a logical way.

Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. This includes some teachers in the sixth form who have previous experience of teaching in post-16 education or in schools with sixth-form provision. Teachers give clear explanations of what they want pupils and students to learn. Across most of the curriculum, leaders have put in place useful ways of assessing how well pupils remember what they have learned. However, in a few subjects, such as mathematics and history, teachers do not identify gaps in some pupils' knowledge as precisely as they could. This means that these pupils do not build their knowledge as securely as possible.

Leaders make reading a priority. Most pupils read fluently and accurately. Leaders give effective support to pupils who find reading difficult. This includes teaching phonics. There are effective systems in place to assess how well most pupils are reading. However, for the small number who need to learn phonics, the checks that teachers make do not pinpoint pupils' gaps in learning as sharply as possible. This

means that these pupils do not develop accuracy and fluency in reading as strongly as they could.

In other subjects, most pupils know and remember more as they make progress through the curriculum. Leaders help the majority of pupils, as well as students in the sixth form, to overcome their considerable barriers to learning and achieve as well as they can. Many gain the qualifications that they need to help them to the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Leaders manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Staff are well trained in methods to de-escalate unacceptable behaviour, only using physical interventions with pupils as a last resort. The environment in school is typically calm and orderly, and mainly allows learning to take place unhindered.

All pupils in the school, and students in the sixth form, have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have effective systems in place to identify any extra needs that may emerge after pupils have joined the school. Leaders provide helpful support for pupils and students, working with parents and carers throughout the process. Leaders balance pupils' academic needs with their social and behavioural needs. As a result, most pupils achieve well.

There is a range of activities beyond the subjects in the curriculum which are available to pupils. For instance, in the past, pupils have enjoyed horse riding. This has been paused because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but leaders plan to bring it back again. Pupils also benefit from helpful careers advice. Leaders support pupils' mental and physical health throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils take part in sessions with their mentors that support pupils' needs.

The large majority of staff said that leaders are approachable and supportive. They are mindful of staff's workload and welfare. Staff explained that, while their workload can be high, and while incidents with pupils can be challenging, they appreciate the close-knit and supportive team that is in place.

Some concerns were raised with the Department for Education (DfE). These related to leaders' management of safeguarding and pupils' and students' behaviour. There was also a relevance to the way leaders manage complaints. Leaders have managed these matters effectively. Inspectors found that there are no whole-school issues arising from the substance of these concerns.

Leaders have a complaints policy that meets the requirements of the independent school standards (the standards). They record any complaints that they receive, including informal complaints. These contain clear details of the complaints and how leaders resolved them.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets all the requirements about publishing essential information. For instance, there is a detailed and current safeguarding policy. This is available to parents and carers on the school's website. Leaders have also made sure that the school meets the government's guidance on providing

relationships and sex education for pupils. There are suitable documents and procedures for matters such as fire safety and first aid.

The members of the proprietor body understand their roles and responsibilities well. They have effective methods for holding the headteacher to account. They have ensured that the school consistently meets the standards.

There is an appropriate accessibility plan in place. Leaders have devised actions such as providing staff with training on software and resources for pupils with SEND. They have created individual plans of how to gain access to the building and make use of large print to convey information clearly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have clear procedures to enable staff to identify safeguarding concerns among pupils, and also students in the sixth form. Staff have a good understanding of what neglect might look like, for example because they receive regular, effective training. Leaders record any concerns in detail and act promptly to provide the help that pupils need. They make referrals to external services, such as social care, when needed.

Staff teach pupils and students how to stay safe through the curriculum. Pupils learn, for example, about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Pupils said that they feel confident to tell an adult if they are worried about anything.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- A small number of pupils find reading difficult. Staff teach these pupils phonics, but they do not make precise enough assessments about what phonics knowledge pupils have not learned securely. This means these pupils do not read as accurately as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers assess these pupils more exactly to find out where their phonics knowledge deficits are. This will help teachers to support these pupils to read with greater fluency.
- In some other subjects, assessment strategies to identify pupils' missing knowledge are not as effective as they could be. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not build their knowledge as strongly as possible. Leaders should ensure that, across all subjects, teachers use suitable assessment strategies to identify pupils' gaps in knowledge so that pupils can make stronger progress through the curriculum.

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

School details

Unique reference number	104839
DfE registration number	342/6004
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10233120
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	14
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Nugent Care
Chair	John-Paul Dennis
Headteacher	Andrew Howard
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000
Telephone number	01744 892 551
Website	www.nugenthouse.co.uk
Email address	nugent.house@wearenugent.org
Dates of previous inspection	3 to 5 March 2020

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new interim headteacher has been appointed.
- Nugent House School caters for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Leaders use two alternative providers for students in the sixth form. Leaders also use one alternative provider to facilitate part-time vocational education placements for pupils of compulsory school age.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- This inspection was requested by the DfE earlier than usual in the inspection cycle to provide up-to-date information about the school. As part of the inspection activity, inspectors considered how leaders manage complaints, pupils' behaviour and safeguarding matters.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: English, history, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. In each subject, they met with the subject leader and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at pupils' and students' work and talked with groups of pupils and students about their learning. Inspectors also explored the curriculum structure in other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at the school's safeguarding policy and related policies and documentation. They checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with pupils. They talked with staff and pupils about safeguarding matters, pupils' personal development and pupils' behaviour and attitudes. They looked at a range of other policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and their education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative of the proprietor body, the headteacher, the chair of the governing body, other school leaders, a carer from a care home and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also evaluated responses to the survey for staff and the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

Adam Sproston

Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's 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