

Inspection of a good school: Inscape House School

Together Trust Campus, Schools Hill, Cheadle, Stockport Cheshire SK8 1JE

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

Outcome

Inscape House School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, build strong and supportive relationships with staff at Inscape House. This helps them to feel safe and happy. Parents and carers value the support and guidance that staff provide. A typical comment was: 'This is a fantastic school that supports my child academically and emotionally.'

Pupils and students live up to leaders' and staff's high expectations. Most pupils and students improve their behaviour considerably over time. They work hard in their lessons and are determined to succeed. Pupils and students said that if any bullying happened, it would be sorted out swiftly and effectively.

Leaders are committed to improving pupils' and students' life chances. Staff work alongside specialists to ensure that pupils and students receive the support that they need. This helps to ensure that pupils and students achieve well in a range of subjects.

Pupils and students benefit from a wide range of opportunities outside of the academic curriculum. They serve staff and visitors with a smile in the on-site café. Leaders have established a successful student council. Student councillors sought their peers' views on how lunchtime clubs could be improved. As a result, pupils and students enjoy taking part in a range of activities. These include a football club, train club and karaoke club.

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

Leaders, staff and governors are ambitious for all pupils. They have established a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of pupils and students well.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculums for most subjects identify the knowledge pupils and students will learn and when they will learn it. This knowledge builds in a logical way so that pupils and students can build new learning securely on what has come before. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified the important knowledge in sufficient detail. This means, in these subjects, pupils and students are not

able to build new learning confidently. Consequently, at times, they do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders and staff work closely with on-site specialists for example, in speech and language, occupational and play therapy. This ensures that pupils' and students' emerging or changing special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly and effectively. Leaders and staff are particularly skilled in supporting pupils and students with autism to access the curriculum. As a result, pupils and students receive tailored work that meets their individual needs. This helps them to remember the curriculum.

Leaders prioritise pupils' and students' communication development. Skilled staff use every opportunity to ensure that pupils and students become confident communicators.

The reading curriculum is well organised. Staff encourage pupils and students to read widely and often. This helps to promote a love of reading throughout the school. Pupils and students who need to catch up with their phonics learning have regular opportunities to do so. Support and guidance for all staff is available from well-trained reading leaders. However, leaders' plans to train staff have been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes training on how to deliver the phonics curriculum in a way that best meets pupils' and students' needs. As a result, some staff lack the confidence and expertise to deliver the phonics curriculum as well as they could.

The school is calm and orderly. Leaders' detailed behaviour records show that pupils and students can demonstrate challenging behaviour. Staff respond proactively to this behaviour and manage it well. For example, pupils and students can use the outside gym to help them to regulate their sensory needs before they return to learning. This minimises any disruptions to other pupils' learning.

Leaders have ensured that pupils and students find out about possible further education, employment or training. For example, students in the sixth form told inspectors that they value their employability lessons. This, alongside aspirational work experience opportunities that reflect students' interests, ensure that they are well informed about future employment options.

Pupils and students benefit from many opportunities to learn beyond the academic curriculum. Leaders provide frequent visits, including to museums and places of worship. Pupils and students learn to value diversity. For example, an LGBTQ+ society meets regularly. Well-organised visits to the community help pupils and students to develop their communication skills, life skills and independence. These opportunities contribute highly to pupils' and students' preparation for adulthood.

Staff appreciate the effort that leaders make to reduce their workload. Staff are proud to be part of the close-knit Inscape House team. They told inspectors that they value the high-quality training and support that they receive. Leaders support staff to progress in their careers. For example, several educational assistants have completed their teacher training at the school and have been appointed as teachers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that keeping pupils and students safe is everyone's responsibility. Regular training enables staff to recognise any signs of potential neglect or abuse. Staff understand the robust procedures for recording and reporting concerns. Leaders quickly involve other agencies so that pupils, students and their families receive appropriate support.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils and students to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, staff ensure that pupils and students learn the importance of washing their hands before preparing and eating food. When the time is right, staff proactively discuss sex and relationships education with pupils and students in a considered way.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified the most important knowledge that pupils and students will learn. This hinders some pupils' and students' progress as they do not build new knowledge on what they already know. Leaders should ensure that the knowledge that pupils and students will learn is clearly identified and sequenced.
- At times, the phonics curriculum is not delivered as intended. Some staff lack the confidence and expertise that they need to deliver the phonics curriculum with fidelity and in a way that meets pupils' and students' needs. Leaders should provide staff with support and training to further strengthen staff's expertise.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

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	134064
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10240132
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	100
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Giles Gaddum
Headteacher	Sara Bayley
Website	www.togethertrust.org.uk/special-education/inscape-house-school
Date of previous inspection	19 April 2017, 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 changes to the leadership of the school since the previous inspection. This includes the appointment of an interim head of school and four deputy headteachers.
- Leaders make use of three registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- 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, personal, social and health education and art and design. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed students' and pupils' work and spoke to teachers, students and pupils.
- The lead inspector also met with the leaders for science, mathematics and geography. He reviewed pupils' and students' work and evaluated these curriculums.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. The lead inspector spoke to senior leaders throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector met remotely with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also met with a director of the Together Trust.
- 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 and students during lessons and social times. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with pupils and students.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to the staff, student and pupil surveys. Inspectors considered several emails from parents that were received during the inspection.

Inspection team

Adam Sproston, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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