

Inspection of Oliver House School

Hallgate, Astley Village, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 1XA

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils delight in attending this unique school. They feel highly valued and appreciated. Pupils' many individual talents and achievements are celebrated. Parents and carers and pupils described the support that they have received through the school as life-changing. High-quality, specialist staff build strong, trusting relationships with pupils and with their families. This ensures that pupils thrive and receive the highest level of care possible.

Staff have exceedingly high expectations of, and are highly ambitious for, every pupil. Staff have an extremely well-developed understanding of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The bespoke curriculum that is in place for each pupil means that they achieve incredibly well.

Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to take an active part in decision-making in school and to contribute to their community. For example, the school council has played an active part in fundraising for charity. Other pupils gained valuable life skills through gardening in the local area.

Pupils learn to regulate their behaviour exceptionally well. This allows them to take part in, and enjoy, a wide range of activities and interests. Pupils acquire the breadth of skills that they need in order to be successful in life and adulthood. Leaders and staff are relentless in ensuring that pupils progress to aspirational destinations following their time at the school. This is because the quality of education that pupils receive is excellent, and pupils shine.

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

Leaders at all levels have created a unique learning environment in which pupils flourish at Oliver House School. The school is outwardly facing and exceptionally reflective when designing and implementing bespoke curriculums to meet the needs of its pupils, all of whom have SEND.

The school has created an incredibly clear vision of what the curriculum should look like for all its pupils. The curriculum is broad, balanced and inclusive of all pupils' needs and abilities. The school has meticulously identified the key knowledge that it wants pupils to learn. Staff have thought carefully about how learning will build for each pupil. Teachers use their expertise to break down learning into specific, achievable goals for each pupil. Leaders and staff place no limits on pupils' achievement. Thus, staff ensure that pupils develop a highly relevant and secure body of knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum.

The school fully involves pupils, staff and parents when constructing the curriculum to meet pupils' individual learning needs. The curriculum is precisely matched to pupils' aspirations and desires for their future lives. If pupils arrive at the school with additional undiagnosed needs, the school is proactive in identifying, assessing and supporting those needs.

Students who are of sixth-form age receive an equally excellent curriculum offer, which is expertly implemented. For post-16 students who will be moving on from Oliver House School, there is an exceptional focus on preparation for later life. This ensures that all students have positive destinations following their time at this school.

Assessment systematically builds through all elements of the curriculum to check how pupils are building their knowledge, skills and understanding. There are regular opportunities for pupils to revisit and reinforce their learning. This ensures that pupils are able to retain learning incredibly well. Staff use their expertise to identify the most appropriate strategies and resources to fill any gaps that pupils have in their learning.

Communication and language skills are at the heart of the curriculum for every pupil. Each pupil has a well-thought-out, individual communication plan. This plan supports staff and other pupils to know how best to communicate with each other. For example, some pupils make use of technology, while others use picture-based methods of communication. Pupils make rapid progress in their ability to communicate. This means that pupils are exceedingly well prepared to communicate in their future lives.

Those pupils who are at the early stages of reading are well supported to develop a strong grasp of phonics. Pupils develop a range of effective techniques to decode words. Regular assessment ensures that teachers adeptly identify where pupils require additional support. Where pupils are able to learn to read, they do so with confidence and fluency. These pupils engage in reading a diverse range of texts, including fiction and non-fiction.

The programme for pupils' wider personal development is fundamental to the success that pupils experience during their time at Oliver House School. It is seamlessly threaded throughout the entire curriculum. The programme of wider personal development is tailored to meet pupils' needs and interests. All pupils experience a wide range of diverse extra-curricular learning opportunities. These activities foster independence and self-confidence in all pupils.

Pupils across the school learn about relationships education. Older pupils have access to age-appropriate sex education. Pupils learn about the diversity of modern Britain, including about different families and different religions. Pupils also have access to carefully tailored careers education, information, advice and guidance.

Leaders prioritise staff workload and well-being. Staff work together as a team to ensure that pupils receive a top-class quality of education. The school is a harmonious place for staff to work. Staff feel extremely well supported in their roles.

The proprietor body, those responsible for overseeing the school, and school leaders have close oversight of the strengths and areas for further development at the school. Together, they ensure that the independent school standards (the standards) are consistently and securely met. For example, there are clear systems in place for

the proprietor body to scrutinise the suitability of premises and the quality of education.

Leaders have a suitable safeguarding policy that meets current statutory guidance. It, along with other policies, is made available to parents on the school's website and also on request. The school has ensured that it is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	131575
DfE registration number	888/6094
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10286399
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	18
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Aspris New Education Services Limited
Chair	John Anderson
Headteacher	Lisa Sharrock
Annual fees (day pupils)	£87,154 to £119,244
Telephone number	01257 220011
Website	www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/oliver-house-school-lancashire/
Email address	oliverhouseschool@aspriscs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 to 18 July 2019

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place between 16 and 18 July 2019.
- An emergency inspection was carried out on 27 April 2022.
- The chair of the proprietor body has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school is located at Hallgate, Astley Village, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 1XA.
- This school is part of the Aspris Children's Services group.
- The school caters for pupils with autism.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and with other staff.
- The lead inspector met with the operations director and the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the standards and the curriculum.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, communication and language, mathematics, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and

considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- A member of school staff was present when inspectors met with pupils. This was to support pupils to be able to communicate with inspectors.
- The lead inspector carried out a tour of the school's premises.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors also spoke to some parents on the telephone.

Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Amina Modan

His Majesty's Inspector

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