

Oliver House School

Address: Hallgate, Astley Village, Chorley , LANCASHIRE, PR7 1XA

Unique reference number (URN): 131575

Inspection report: 22 September 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Exceptional ●

Achievement

Exceptional ●

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and an education, health and care plan. Many arrive following significantly disrupted educational experiences. Staff quickly identify barriers to learning and create a highly personalised curriculum that helps pupils re-engage with education and experience success. Through an ambitious and nurturing approach, pupils develop the skills, knowledge, confidence and qualifications they need to move forward successfully in life. Pupils achieve exceptionally well because staff pinpoint their strengths, believe in their potential and never give up on them.

As pupils open themselves up to learning, they make exceptional progress from their individual starting points in communication, literacy and numeracy. Pupils gain qualifications, including ASDAN awards and GCSEs where appropriate, and take part in enriching opportunities that broaden their aspirations. As a result, pupils achieve far more than they, and their families, ever believed possible. They move confidently into further education, employment or training. Many of the pupils' complex barriers to learning are significantly reduced and consequently do not limit their future success.

Attendance and behaviour

Exceptional ●

Leaders maintain a clear focus on attendance and behaviour through an exceptional culture of care, inclusion and high expectations. They work tirelessly alongside pupils and families to overcome barriers to attendance. Many pupils arrive after long periods out of education and find attending school very difficult. Staff take time to understand each pupil's experiences, needs and worries. Through personalised support, patient encouragement and excellent relationships, staff help pupils rebuild confidence and reconnect with learning. As a result, pupils make remarkable improvements in their attendance. Most pupils arrive having not attended school at all and quickly start to come to school every day.

The school's strong nurturing ethos, supported by exemplary pastoral care, helps pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Consequently, behaviour is typically excellent. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and combine high expectations with kindness, understanding and consistency. They recognise that many pupils struggle to manage their emotions and provide tailored support to help them succeed. For example, pupils can access personalised spaces that help them feel calm, regulated and ready to learn. Staff use praise and encouragement to great effect, creating a positive, calm and purposeful environment where pupils thrive. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are extremely rare. When concerns arise, staff act quickly and effectively. Consequently, pupils trust staff, feel listened to and enjoy being part of the school community.

Curriculum and teaching

Exceptional ●

Leaders create an ambitious, well-ordered and highly inclusive curriculum. It reflects their deep understanding of each pupil as an individual. Leaders take time to thoroughly understand pupils' strengths, interests, aspirations and barriers to learning. They create highly personalised curriculum pathways that ensure pupils succeed. Staff know pupils'

needs can change from day to day and over time. They adapt learning expertly so that it remains relevant, engaging and highly effective.

Teaching is extremely effective because staff know their pupils exceptionally well. They understand when to provide extra support, when to challenge further, when to pull back and how to spark pupils' curiosity. Staff show enormous patience and sensitivity. Exceptionally trusting relationships help pupils feel safe to take risks, make mistakes and experience success.

Leaders ensure communication, emotional development, literacy and numeracy sit at the heart of the curriculum. Staff identify gaps in learning with precision and provide effective support that helps pupils build secure knowledge and skills over time. Reading plays a central role in school life. Staff provide sensitive support for pupils as many find reading difficult. This helps them to develop confidence and enjoyment.

Inclusion

Exceptional ●

An exceptional approach to inclusion shapes every aspect of school life. All pupils have complex autism. Most have previously experienced an extremely disrupted education, high levels of anxiety and little trust in schools. Staff, with great tenacity, take time to understand each pupil's uniqueness, strengths and barriers. Through patience, expertise and excellent partnerships with families and other professionals, they help pupils feel safe, settled and ready to learn.

Staff create highly personalised support and learning pathways that reflect each pupil's interests, abilities and aspirations. They adapt the curriculum carefully as pupils' needs change and provide tailored resources and support. For example, pupils have personalised workspaces designed around their needs and interests. These individual sanctuaries help pupils feel secure, build trust and engage positively in learning. Leaders regularly review the impact of support and make swift changes when needed. Staff benefit from specialist training and adapt their teaching adeptly so that every pupil can succeed.

Leaders' inclusion practice changes the lives of pupils and their families. Pupils who arrive unable to communicate begin to express themselves with confidence. Others learn to read and write, gain qualifications, move on to college and develop ambitions that once seemed out of reach. Pupils develop confidence, independence and resilience. They leave exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education and for successful, fulfilling futures.

Leadership and governance

Exceptional ●

Leaders have created a remarkable school that transforms the lives of pupils and their families. They place pupils' needs and aspirations at the centre of every decision. They foster a culture of ambition, compassion and inclusion. Leaders understand pupils' complex needs exceptionally well and ensure that every aspect of school life helps pupils overcome barriers, build confidence and succeed.

Leaders know the school deeply. They reflect constantly on its work and never stop looking for ways to improve pupils' experiences and outcomes. Professional development is a

significant strength. Leaders provide high-quality training that reflects current research and the needs of pupils and staff. This helps staff develop specialist expertise and provide highly effective support. The school's work is recognised beyond the local community. Leaders regularly share their expertise with other professionals nationally and internationally.

A culture of trust, openness and teamwork runs throughout the school. Leaders understand the emotional demands of the work they do and place strong emphasis on staff wellbeing and workload. As a result, staff feel valued, supported and proud to be part of the school.

Relationships with families are exceptional. Leaders and staff build trust through kindness, honesty and genuine partnership. Parents and carers speak warmly about the difference the school makes, often describing the change in their children as life changing and transformative.

The proprietor and governing body provide effective support and challenge. They bring considerable expertise, fulfil their statutory duties diligently and ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently. Their highly effective oversight contributes significantly to the school's ongoing success.

Personal development and wellbeing

Exceptional 

Personal development and wellbeing shape every aspect of school life. From the moment pupils join the school, staff help them build the independence and life skills they need to thrive. Leaders take a long-term approach, carefully planning each pupil's journey and celebrating the small steps that lead to remarkable achievements. Over time, pupils develop the resilience, self-belief and practical skills they need for adulthood and their next steps of education, employment or training.

Pastoral care is a significant strength. Staff build strong, trusting relationships with pupils and provide consistent encouragement, guidance and support. Through patience, care and unwavering belief in their potential, staff help pupils see what they can achieve and develop confidence in themselves. A highly individual, personal, social, health and economic curriculum and relationships and sex education curriculum helps pupils understand topics such as healthy relationships, emotional wellbeing, online safety and physical health.

Staff weave life skills through the curriculum and daily routines. Pupils learn to communicate effectively, prepare meals, manage personal responsibilities and engage positively with others. They discover interests and talents through activities such as fishing, gardening, cooking and outdoor learning.

Careers education is highly personalised and closely aligned to pupils' strengths and aspirations. Staff provide meaningful work-related experiences and carefully planned placements. For examples, pupils gain experience in floristry, information technology, animal care and establish their own small businesses.

Pupils broaden their horizons through educational visits, volunteering and community projects. They develop empathy, respect and a sense of social awareness and responsibility. Pupils gain a secure understanding of equality, diversity and British values.

Many pupils achieve goals they once thought impossible. Parents talk proudly of their children having independence, life skills, participating in college or employment in a way they thought was out of their child's reach. They often describe the impact on their children and family lives as truly transformational. Pupils leave as confident, resilient young people who believe in themselves and are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond school.

Post-16 provision

Exceptional 

The post-16 curriculum prepares students exceptionally well for life beyond school. Like elsewhere in the school, staff know each student extremely well and tailor learning to their individual needs, interests and aspirations. As a result, learning is meaningful, purposeful and tightly linked to students' future goals.

Developing independence sits at the centre of the curriculum. Students learn skills such as cooking, shopping, housekeeping and how to engage with people in the local community. These experiences help them grow in confidence, resilience and self-belief.

Work experience is a particular strength. Staff find creative opportunities that match students' interests and abilities. For example, students work on farms, support older people with shopping, welcome visitors to school and help with daily tasks. These experiences enable students to explore future career paths and develop employability skills.

Students engage enthusiastically in their learning and make excellent progress from their starting points. Staff carefully support transition and provide personalised enrichment opportunities that prepare students for adulthood. As a result, students move on successfully to mainstream or specialist colleges, volunteering and community-based roles.

The impact of the post-16 provision is transformational. Students leave as confident, independent young people who believe in themselves and their future. They are exceptionally well prepared to take their next steps and contribute positively to their community and wider society.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Oliver House School transforms lives. Many pupils arrive after long periods away from education, often having had traumatic previous experiences, and with little confidence. From the moment they join, they are met with warmth, understanding and an unwavering belief in their potential. Extremely trusting relationships between pupils, staff and families sit at the heart of the school. As a result, pupils feel extremely safe, highly valued and genuinely understood.

Pupils flourish in a highly inclusive environment where every pupil matters deeply. Small classes, therapeutic support and highly personalised learning help pupils feel secure, rebuild confidence and experience success. Staff celebrate achievements, talents and everyday milestones, however small. This helps pupils develop self-belief and pride. Pupils who once struggled begin to enjoy learning, attend well and engage in school life. As confidence

grows, pupils rediscover a love of learning and thrive in a caring, supportive and unique community.

Staff know pupils exceptionally well. They create excellent learning pathways that perfectly reflect pupils' strengths, interests and needs. Pupils develop communication, literacy and numeracy skills, gain qualifications and take part in enriching opportunities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Staff combine high expectations with kindness, encouragement and relentless support. Consequently, pupils achieve exceptionally well and are well prepared for a rewarding and meaningful future.

Pupils grow enormously in their personal development. They learn to make positive choices, regulate their behaviour and build healthy relationships. Bullying is extremely rare. If ever it does occur, staff tackle incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils know their voices matter and contribute through the school council, fundraising activities and community projects. A rich range of experiences beyond the classroom helps pupils engage in existing interests and discover new ones. Pupils leave as confident, increasingly capable young people who believe in themselves and look forward to a bright future. They are extremely well prepared for adulthood and their next stage of education, employment or training.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This inspection took place from 22 September to 24 September 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with representatives of the proprietor body, the chair of governors, who is also the regional director of the company, the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers and the school business manager during the inspection. They also spoke with other staff and where possible pupils about what it is like to be part of the school.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and have an education, health and care plan, predominately for autism.

The school does not use alternative provision.

The proprietor is Aspris New Education Services Limited. The chair of the proprietor body is Nancy-Rose O'Regan.

Annual fees for the school range from £95,869 to £131,168.

The school's email address is oliverhouseschool@aspriscs.co.uk

Headteacher: Lisa Sharrock

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

1. Quality of education provided

Standards met

All standards have been met.

2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:

Sue Eastwood, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Cole Andrew, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 22 September 2026

Total pupils

55

School capacity

55

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

55

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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