

Wargrave House School

Address: 449 Wargrave Road, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside, WA12 8RS

Unique reference number (URN): 134888

Inspection report: 9 June 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, typically make secure progress from their starting points across a range of subjects.

Many pupils have experienced disrupted education prior to joining this school. Leaders prioritise pupils' communication and reading skills. Staff skilfully support pupils to understand and express their emotions, sensory needs and preferences using a range of well-chosen strategies. These include verbal reinforcement and use of visual aids such as pictures, signs and symbols. These approaches help pupils to engage with their learning successfully. Many pupils can remember their prior learning. They can articulate what they know about their favourite subjects. Most pupils make positive progress in their social interaction and communication skills.

In key stage 4, pupils generally achieve well across a range of accredited qualifications, including GCSEs where appropriate. Pupils leave the school well prepared to progress on to suitable destinations in further education, employment and training.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Many pupils have had limited engagement with education prior to starting at this school. Leaders plan and manage pupils' transition into the school sensitively. This helps to rebuild pupils' trust and confidence and supports them to re-engage with learning. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the barriers that pupils face. They use a range of personalised strategies, including working closely with families and providing therapeutic support, to help pupils to improve their attendance. Many pupils' attendance successfully improves over time. Leaders work tenaciously and with persistence to support those pupils who have medical needs or difficulties with transport to help them attend school regularly.

Staff forge positive and respectful relationships with pupils. Staff are well trained in de-escalation techniques and respond calmly to any pupils who may be experiencing a moment of crisis. These approaches contribute to a settled and orderly environment in which pupils feel safe. In classrooms, most pupils listen attentively to others and remain focused on their learning. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils typically behave in a calm manner. They enjoy using the swings and the outdoor gym, or playing football together on the astroturf. Many pupils eat their morning toast and lunch with staff. This further strengthens the sense of trust within the school. Pupils' behaviour improves the longer they spend at school. Bullying and any derogatory language is dealt with quickly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and priorities for developing the curriculum and how it is taught. Pupils follow a broad curriculum that includes many outdoor learning experiences. The curriculum is thoughtfully tailored to meet pupils' individual needs. Older pupils work towards a range of awards and qualifications, including GCSEs. However,

for a small number of older pupils, the curriculum is not as ambitious as it could be. This sometimes limits the progress that pupils can make.

Teachers draw on their subject knowledge to design and adapt activities well. This allows pupils to experience success and build their confidence, knowledge and skills well.

Staff play a pivotal role in helping pupils to focus and access their learning. In the main, teachers use a range of strategies effectively to check pupils' understanding and address any errors or misconceptions. However, occasionally, some staff intervene too quickly before pupils have had time to think through their response. This can limit pupils' independence and their opportunities to develop resilience.

Leaders draw on specialist advice that enables pupils to develop their skills in communication, reading and mathematics. This ensures that pupils are well supported to access learning across the curriculum.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Inclusion lies at the heart of leaders' work. Leaders make effective use of pupils' education, health and care plans to build a thorough understanding of each pupils' needs. Leaders identify pupils' emerging and changing special educational needs and/or disabilities accurately. This ensures that staff have a clear understanding of how best to support every pupil.

Leaders provide teachers with guidance and training to help them meet pupils' needs with confidence. Pupils are supported through a range of effective strategies, including sensory circuits and assistive technology. Staff respond quickly and sensitively to any pupils who may become unsettled. These strategies help pupils to return to a calm state of mind and be ready to learn.

Pupils receive a personalised package of therapeutic support that helps them to overcome their individual barriers to learning. Leaders work closely with a wide range of professionals, including occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. This enables pupils to develop their communication skills and participate fully in school life.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully. This allows them to put appropriate help in place promptly for any pupils who may require additional support to learn well. Leaders understand how additional funding is intended to benefit disadvantaged pupils. However, the impact of this funding on disadvantaged pupils' attendance and behaviour is not monitored closely enough. This makes it harder to adjust strategies and support in a timely way.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the key strengths of the school and what needs to improve. Leaders have a thorough knowledge of pupils' needs and have established strategies to support them well.

Leaders, together with trustees and governors, are ambitious for pupils and act in their best interests. They have developed partnerships, such as with a local outdoor centre, through

which pupils can take part in sensory projects linked to gardening, horticulture and nature. These experiences help pupils to explore new environments and support their ability to manage their emotions.

Trustees and governors are very supportive of leaders and their work. They ask leaders probing and informed questions that aid their sound understanding of many aspects of the school's provision. Trustees carry out their statutory duties effectively, including in relation to safeguarding.

Leaders and governors recognise that they need to improve their strategic oversight of some areas of the school, such as evaluating the impact of pupil premium funding with greater precision. At present, this funding does not fully have the impact on disadvantaged pupils' experiences that leaders intend.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Their wellbeing and workload are genuinely considered by leaders. Wellbeing initiatives which offer staff opportunities to take part in yoga, arts and crafts are greatly appreciated. Staff benefit from valuable professional learning activities that improve their knowledge and classroom practice. Staff value the contribution of the therapy team, who help them to understand and respond effectively to pupils' social and emotional needs. Parents and carers are very positive about the care and support that their children receive.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a comprehensive programme of personal development that is accessible to all pupils. Pupils learn about healthy relationships. Leaders respond proactively to any emerging risks for pupils. For example, guest speakers help pupils to learn how discrimination can lead to hate crime. This helps pupils to know what to do if they feel unsafe or anxious online.

Pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values through taking turns in games of bowling and voting in school council elections. Pupils learn to respect others and explore the concepts of right and wrong. Pupils broaden their cultural understanding and creative expression through participation in Bollywood and Chinese dance and the school pantomime.

Leaders emphasise pastoral care. Therapy teams provide targeted interventions when needed. Emotional regulation strategies, including 'feeling wheels' and 'energy meters', are used effectively to support pupils' individual wellbeing and mental health. Leaders and staff follow up any concerns in a sensitive and positive manner.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities. Sports and other clubs help pupils to develop their physical skills, co-ordination and team work. Pupils' participation is carefully tracked to make sure everyone can join in.

Leaders and governors take pupils' views seriously and act on their wishes where appropriate. Recent examples include buying a pool table and building a new outdoor seating area.

The careers programme is of a high quality. Visits to colleges and taking part in enterprise activities raise pupils' aspirations and equip them to make informed choices about their futures. All pupils who leave the school progress onto appropriate education, employment or training.

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

Wargave House School is a nurturing and friendly school that embraces each pupil as an individual. Many pupils arrive having experienced disruption to their schooling. They are warmly welcomed by caring staff. Pupils are supported to understand their autism and to see it as part of who they are. They receive personalised support that removes or reduces their barriers to learning so that they can thrive.

Pupils develop positive and trusting relationships with staff. This helps pupils to feel safe and valued. Pupils' voices are heard and respected. They play a meaningful role in shaping school decisions. This deepens their sense of belonging in the school community. Pupils are typically calm and well behaved. They follow routines consistently well. Pupils show respect to each other and to staff. Pupils benefit from a range of therapeutic approaches that enable their behaviour and attendance to improve over time. Bullying is not tolerated.

Pupils enjoy learning. Their independence grows as they move up the school. They achieve well from their individual starting points.

Pupils enjoy a rich variety of experiences that broaden their understanding of the world around them. Visits to local parks and museums bring learning to life. Activities, such as dance, sports and board games, nurture their talents and interests. Pupils embrace opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as working in the school's shop and café. These opportunities develop their practical and social skills. Leaders have invested in a radio studio. This enables pupils to explore the world of broadcasting and develop their technology and communication skills.

Pupils develop confidence and resilience through a wide range of outdoor activities, including rock climbing and cycling. Other experiences, such as using public transport to get to the supermarket, are carefully planned and equip pupils with the skills they need to lead independent lives.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is appropriately aspirational for older pupils so that it support them to develop the detailed knowledge and skills needed to achieve all that they can.
- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently promote pupils' independence by allowing them time to process information and decide on their responses to questions.
- Leaders and governors should strengthen their strategic oversight of some areas of the school's work, such as the evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding, in order to

make more precise and informed decisions that will support them in making further improvements.

About this inspection

This school is part of Remarkable Autism, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Robin Bush, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Muir Miller.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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 the executive headteacher, headteachers of the primary and secondary phases, and staff and pupils in the school. The lead inspector spoke with the CEO, trustees, including the chair of the trust board and chair of the governing body.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school provides education for pupils with autism spectrum condition. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Places are commissioned by local authorities.

The school is registered for pupils between 5 and 16 years. Currently, pupils aged from 7 to 16 years attend the school.

The school does not use alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. There have been some changes in the senior leadership team since the last inspection. The executive headteacher was appointed in October 2025. The headteachers of the primary and secondary phases took up post in April 2026.

Executive Headteacher: Juliet Doherty

Lead inspector:

Ahmed Marikar, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Carolyn Duncan, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

76

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

School capacity

90

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

32.89%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

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

100.00%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school
2023 leavers (revised)	
2022 leavers (revised)	
2021 leavers (revised)	

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school
2024/25 (3 term)	11.8%
2023/24 (3 term)	10.3%
2022/23 (3 term)	10.8%

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school
2024/25 (3 term)	26.0%
2023/24 (3 term)	32.8%
2022/23 (3 term)	29.8%

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.

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