

Inspection of Wren Spinney Community School

Westover Road, Off Westhill Drive, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 7LB

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Joshua Gershwin-Williams. This school is part of Creating Tomorrow multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Kevin Latham, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeannette Payne.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Wren Spinney Community School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Wren Spinney Community Special School to be outstanding, before it opened as Wren Spinney Community School as a result of conversion to academy status. The school received an ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Act on 22 and 23 February 2022.

What is it like to attend this school?

Wren Spinney Community School is an exceptionally welcoming place for pupils and students to learn. Staff quickly form warm and caring relationships with pupils, and strong relationships with their families. Adults know the pupils extremely well. They work as a team to decide how best to support pupils so that they make the best progress possible. The school's vision to build communication and enable independence is at the heart of every aspect of school life.

Pupils are listened to and respected by staff. This helps them to feel happy and safe. The school has created an environment where every pupil is nurtured, valued and supported to be as independent as possible.

Expectations are high, no matter what pathway pupils are following. This ensures that every pupil achieves their goals.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of curriculum activities that promote their personal development. For example, pupils enjoy equine therapy and swimming to support their physical and mental health.

Parents and carers told inspectors how their children had achieved far more than they could ever have hoped for. Parents commonly spoke of being part of the 'Wren Family' and the difference this school makes for their child.

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

The school identifies pupils' needs very well. Adults carefully consider the information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to make certain that the correct provision is in place to meet pupils' communication, learning, and social and emotional needs. Pupils study one of three pathways. These are the 'sensory', 'structured' and 'collaborative' pathways. Great thought has been applied to detail the relevant and meaningful knowledge and skills that the school wants pupils to learn and when in each pathway. This ambitious curriculum is designed to ensure that all pupils and students develop their independence and are prepared extremely well for their transition to meaningful education or supported residential or day-care provision.

There is highly effective collaboration between teaching staff and the school's therapists, such as the speech and language and occupational therapists. This expert multi-disciplinary team contributes much to the care and also to the quality of education pupils receive.

There is a clear approach to teaching communication, which all staff understand and use. Staff recap on language and involve pupils as thoroughly as they can in learning using a wide range of communication devices. Staff are respectful and very kind towards pupils, talking to them as they narrate what is happening now and next. This builds trust between staff and pupils.

Staff manage pupil behaviour exceptionally well. Adults take time to discuss lesson transitions and to encourage pupils to take part in activities. They are highly successful in helping pupils to regulate their emotions. The school's total communication approach is integral to this, as staff see behaviour as a form of communication.

Pupils enjoy stories and songs at Wren Spinney. For example, pupils in the sensory provision greet each other daily with song to practise their communication skills. Pupils enjoy sensory stories together. Pupils who can access phonics are taught by expert practitioners. They become confident, fluent readers.

Students in the sixth form study academic courses and learn how to look after themselves so that they can be as independent as possible. They form firm friendships and support each other well in lessons, for example when completing a piece of creative artwork in a group. Their educational journey culminates with the pursuit of an accredited qualification in personal progress.

Pupils receive impartial careers guidance. Transitions events with parents and providers ensure that students are very well supported in making informed decisions about their next steps. Pupils' personal development is exceptional and preparation for adulthood threads through school life. Pupils have regular opportunities to go out into the local area. They visit shops to hone their skills in communicating with people outside of the school. Pupils enjoy trips to Woburn Safari Park and delight in fly fishing. Sixth-form students run the school's tuck shop as active citizens in their community. Pupils develop a sense of democracy through voting for the active school council. They celebrate Eid with smells and tastes, and celebrate Black History Month through experiencing African drumming workshops. These experiences help pupils to gain an understanding of the world around them.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They are very positive about the support they receive from leaders for their workload and well-being. Staff receive highly appropriate professional development and develop specialist expertise. As a result, they are skilled in making the most effective changes to lesson activities. These always align to pupils' EHC plans. Consequently, pupils achieve exceptionally well.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144684
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10254783
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	17
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeannette Payne
CEO of the trust	Kevin Latham
Headteacher	Joshua Gershwin-Williams
Website	www.wrenspinney.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Wren Spinney Community School is a special school for pupils aged 11 to 18 who have complex needs, including severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning disability, autism spectrum disorder, visual impairment, hearing impairment and multi-sensory impairment.
- All pupils and students have an EHC plan. Places are commissioned by five different local authorities.
- This school is part of the Creating Tomorrow multi-academy trust.
- Pupils study one of three pathways, depending on their needs. These are the 'sensory', 'structured' and 'collaborative' pathways.
- At the time of inspection, an interim chair of governors was in place.

- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading and communication, good health education (the play curriculum and food technology), independent living education, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work where available.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders and the school improvement adviser.
- The lead inspector spoke to the chair of governors and representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees, the CEO and the chief operating officer.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents on the school website and documentation relating to the governance of the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents and records linking to attendance and behaviour, and school improvement documentation.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils from all pathways, parents and staff through discussions and a consideration of their responses to the online surveys, including the free-text facility in Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Anne Maingay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gayle Bacon

Ofsted Inspector

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