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Ofsted praises West Kirby School and College in Wirral

SPECIALIST school has been praised for its "transformational" education and inclusive approach.

West Kirby School and College, on Meols Drive in Wirral, received glowing feedback following a full inspection by Ofsted, which took place on July 7.

The school, part of the West Kirby Educational Trust, supports children with complex needs, primarily autism and social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) challenges, all of whom have education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Inspectors found that pupils thrive in the school's supportive environment, with many arriving after "disrupted" early education experiences.

The report stated: "Pupils thrive at West Kirby School and College.

"Many arrive after a disrupted experience to their early education.

"Staff welcome them warmly and help them to quickly feel part of the school community.

"As a result, pupils feel safe, valued and included. "Every member of staff lives out the school's motto 'Changing Children's Lives.'"

Ofsted described the school's culture as calm and inclusive, noting that pupils show positive attitudes to learning and benefit from a purposeful atmosphere.

Improvements in attendance and behaviour were also recognised, with persistent absence significantly reduced, including among disadvantaged pupils.

Inspectors praised the school's leadership, stating that all decisions are centred on delivering the best outcomes for pupils, both academically and socially.

The report said: "In many areas of the school's work, they succeed.

"In those areas which are not quite as strong, improvements happen at pace to bring them up to the same standard as other areas of the school's work."

Inspectors praised leaders' "razor sharp focus" and the "wealth of knowledge and expertise" of trustees and governors.

Inspectors noted that "high aspirations sit at the heart of the curriculum" and that "pupils benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum that encourages them to achieve well".

While Ofsted said the school meets the expected standard for achievement, it noted in the next steps section of the report that assessment systems in Key Stage 3 could be clearer to help narrow gaps in foundational knowledge more quickly.

The inspection highlighted the school's focus on personal development and preparation for adulthood, with pupils encouraged to develop confidence, resilience and a positive sense of identity.

Pupil voice was described as "central" to school life, with opportunities for students to take on leadership roles and contribute to the wider community.

Headteacher Richard Hicks commented: "Inspectors judged our school as strong across five areas, and 'strong' is exactly the right word.

"It reflects not only the standard inspectors found, but the strength of relationships, the strength of support, and the strength of belief we hold in every one of our pupils.

"This is a proud moment for our whole school community, and it belongs to every member of staff who goes above and beyond for our young people, every single day."

The school currently supports 110 pupils and is led by headteacher Richard Hicks. The full Ofsted report is available at reports.ofsted.gov.uk.