

# Inspection of a good school: Norton Hill Academy

Charlton Road, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Somerset BA3 4AD

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

## Outcome

Norton Hill Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are ambitious for what pupils can achieve. Pupils, therefore, receive a high-quality education. Pupils are proud to attend Norton Hill Academy. They feel safe and happy at school. Pupils say they enjoy learning and the large range of trips, clubs and activities available to them. These include outdoor education, music, drama, dance and sports. Leaders encourage all pupils to take part. As a result, many pupils benefit from these opportunities.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Pupils behave well at school because they understand that it is the right thing to do. Pupils are tolerant and respectful towards each other and to members of staff. Bullying is rare. Pupils say they know who to talk to if they have any concerns. They are confident these will be dealt with quickly.

The sixth form offers a wide range of courses and opportunities. These include trips, music and drama. Younger pupils want to progress into the sixth form because they know they will achieve well. Many students take up places in higher education or progress on to apprenticeships.

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

Pupils follow a well-designed curriculum and benefit from a rich set of experiences. Subject leaders are experts in their field, and they have carefully planned what to teach and when. They have considered the knowledge and skills that pupils will need to develop in each subject. They also provide staff with the subject-specific training they need to deliver the curriculum well.

Teachers use their expertise to check whether pupils have understood the new ideas introduced in the curriculum. Teaching is responsive and helps pupils to overcome any misconceptions. Pupils, therefore, confidently explain what they have learned over time.

This is an inclusive school. Leaders identify the help that pupils need when they join the school. This includes those who need support with reading. Pupils who are furthest behind receive support from trained staff. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders provide teachers with clear information about each pupil. Teachers use this to make sure that pupils with SEND achieve highly. Students with SEND in the sixth form achieve well.

There are clear expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are positive, and they conduct themselves well around the school site. They join in and contribute to discussions. Pupils talk about their learning enthusiastically.

Students in the sixth form act as positive role models. Younger pupils say they aspire to be like them. The sixth-form council organises voluntary activities and events for the wider school community.

Leaders have put a strong curriculum in place to support pupils' personal development. This covers important themes, which prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn how to make decisions about their own lives. They also learn to be tolerant and understanding of others. Pupils receive regular advice and guidance about potential future career paths. This prepares them well to take the next steps in their lives.

Trustees and senior leaders have a clear vision. They provide support and challenge for leaders and other staff. Staff are proud to work at the school. They think leaders listen to them and treat them well. Parents are largely positive about the school. However, a small number say communication between school and home could be improved further.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff understand its importance. They know how and when to report concerns about pupils or adults. Staff receive effective training.

Leaders make timely referrals to safeguarding partners. They engage other agencies to support pupils. Leaders are not afraid to challenge others to secure the support that children need. They complete appropriate checks before adults start working in the school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They say that they are confident to talk to staff if they have any concerns.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A minority of parents feel that staff do not always communicate clearly with them about the school's support for their child. This can sometimes weaken the relationship between school and home. Leaders should ensure that parents receive regular and timely communication to allow them to support the school effectively.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

## 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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136335
<b>Local authority</b>	Bath and North East Somerset Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10250469
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,851
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	402
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Stuart Warrener
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gordon Green
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.nortonhillschool.com">www.nortonhillschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 July 2017

## Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the chief executive officer, a trustee, and a member of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum

with subject leaders, visited a selection of lessons, met teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, examined school safeguarding records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors talked with a leader from the alternative provision that the school uses.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Matthew Collins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Kerr	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Redding	Ofsted Inspector

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