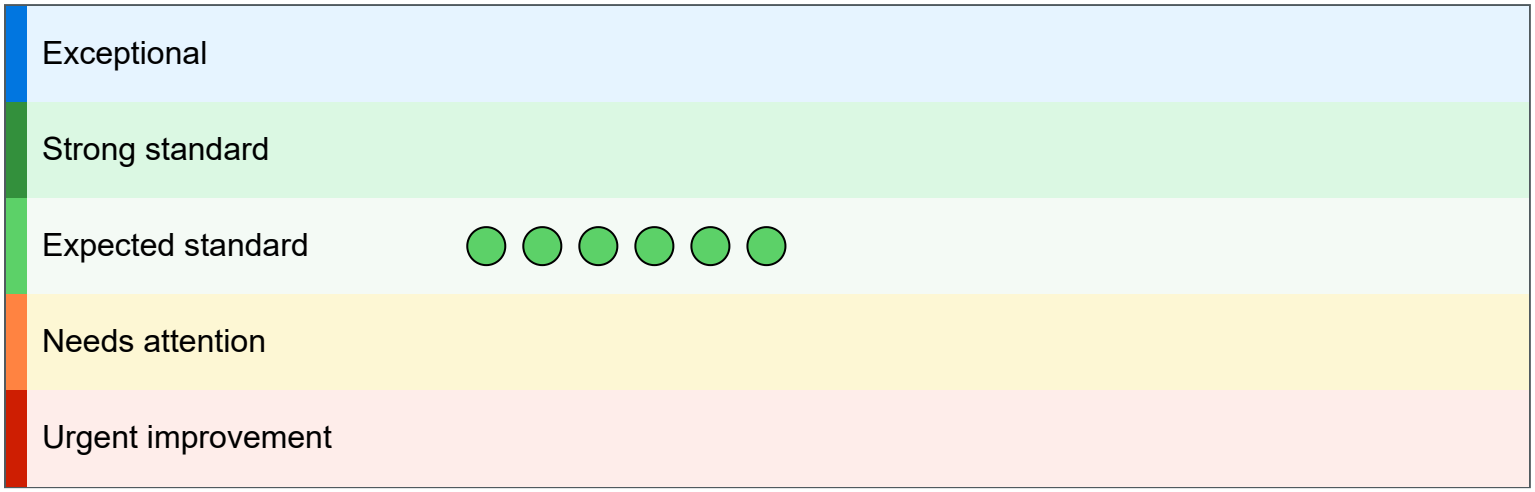
Oakbridge School

Address: Church Lane, Birmingham, B20 2HL

Unique reference number (URN): 145859

Inspection report: 27 January 2026



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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils typically achieve well from their starting points. Many pupils join the school with gaps in learning because they have previously missed education. Staff identify what pupils do not know and teach core knowledge in reading. When the time is right, staff identify the pathway for examinations that are of most benefit to individual pupils. Many pupils achieve success as a result of this personalised approach. Generally, pupils make suitable progress over time and build the knowledge and skills that they need for their next stage of education.

For younger pupils, basic mathematical understanding is typically secure. Pupils use number knowledge confidently in lessons and in practical activities. Writing is not as embedded. Some pupils do not yet show consistent habits, but staff and leaders are continuing to strengthen this.

Pupils develop spoken language well. Whole-school strategies, including 'words of the week' and staff modelling, help pupils use richer vocabulary and explain ideas clearly.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

There is a clear focus on making attendance a daily priority. Staff work closely with families to remove barriers, review cases regularly and adjust support sensitively. Some pupils have spent long periods of time not attending school at all prior to joining the school. Occasionally, on arrival at Oakbridge, some pupils take longer to engage with full-time education on the school site. Flexible learning plans support in situations like these. Attendance is now improving from very low starting points for many pupils, but it is still below leaders' expectations and needs to rise further while maintaining the school's compassionate approach to partnership working.

The behaviour culture is calm and caring. Adults are visible and consistent, so pupils trust that they will be supported. Relationships between staff and pupils are highly positive. Pupils also show respect and tolerance for each other. Differences are accepted freely. Staff understand the school's expectations around behaviour and apply them consistently, but with the sensitivity and compassion that you would expect. The effective pastoral team provides additional support if it is needed. A small number of pupils still miss too much learning time when they take breaks to manage their emotions. The school is refining how they check this so they can spot patterns and adjust support to minimise the impact on learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The curriculum is clear, well organised and adapted to pupils' starting points. It secures foundations in reading, writing, mathematics and communication, so pupils can access a broad range of learning as they move through the school. Typically, staff check what pupils know and plan next steps that close gaps over time.

Teaching is effective. Where it is most effective, staff explain new learning clearly, revisit important knowledge and build in practice so pupils remember more and can do more. If pupils have missed a significant time out of school, staff focus on rebuilding the basic skills that are missing before they move on to more complex learning.

Staff make thoughtful adjustments and adaptations, based on their detailed knowledge of each pupil. These adjustments support pupils to engage with learning in a positive way. Some staff are still developing approaches that keep pupils engaged while also meeting their emotional needs.

Some curriculum subjects have significant strengths. The school is working to secure consistently strong teaching in every class and across all subjects, so the high expectations and outcomes seen in some subjects is typical across all. The school prioritises ongoing professional learning and development so that their staff have the subject knowledge required to enable pupils to make the best possible progress from their varying starting points.

Inclusion

Expected standard

The school places inclusion at the centre of its work. Every pupil has an education health and care plan (EHCP). Staff adopt an effective pupil-centred approach that involves families in important decisions. Regular contact with parents builds trust, allows for two-way information-sharing and helps adults respond quickly when pupils face difficulties or have struggles.

Leaders manage EHCP processes with precision. Reviews happen on time and reflect pupils' changing needs. Plans set out clear actions and staff use them to shape teaching, therapy and daily routines. Again, leaders involve parents and carers and other professionals and keep plans as supportive, working documents. They effectively support pupils to make the progress that they are capable of. Leaders integrate therapy into pupils' programmes. Speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and social communication support are seamlessly interwoven through daily practice. Staff also use targeted sessions, such as friendship work, so pupils receive joined-up help from adults who understand their barriers and help pupils to overcome them.

Leaders prevent isolation through a flexible learning offer. When this happens, staff keep daily contact and complete home visits when pupils cannot attend. They record learning and keep pupils connected to routines. This approach leads to many success stories whereby pupils eventually fully integrate with on-site education and attend regularly.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders are clear about the school's purpose and the pupils it serves. Every decision is carefully considered with pupils' interests at the heart of all the school does. Pupils' induction is highly effective and robust. The individualised approach supports safety, regulation and access to learning. Leaders took carefully considered steps to support the transition to the new, state-of-the-art school building, allowing most pupils to settle into their new environment quickly. Leaders have a clear understanding of what they do very well and where to prioritise continued improvements.

The proprietor body sets consistent expectations and checks that agreed approaches are followed. Oversight is regular and purposeful, with a strong focus on safeguarding, quality and compliance. As a result, the independent school standards are met consistently. Committee structures provide additional scrutiny, including regular attention to safeguarding trends and concerns, so the curriculum can be adapted to further enhance the commitment to keeping pupils safe.

The use of funding is carefully considered and is always linked to pupils' needs. This supports placements when pupils first arrive at Oakbridge and ensures that these can be sustained. Clinical specialists, employed by the school, have improved how quickly pupils get high-quality support. Staff development is a strength: there are opportunities for longer-term learning to aid retention and continue to strengthen the provision further. This ensures that Oakbridge is a school where pupils thrive.

Staff are proud members of the Oakbridge family. A strong focus on workload and wellbeing supports a stable staffing structure, which clearly benefits pupils. Pupils and their parents are equally positive about the support, education and care available.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The personal development programme is thoughtfully planned. Pupils learn the life skills they will need as adults, including how to look after themselves, form healthy relationships and stay safe online and in the real world. Staff make sure content is relevant to pupils' real lives to support their understanding. Pupils take on roles that contribute to the school community and beyond. They learn how to make choices, listen to others and respect each others' interests. Opportunities during the school day help pupils explore these. If a pupil has a specific interest outside of school, staff and pupils come together to help support the causes that are important to them. Equally, if pupils have a particular skill, whether this be in music or art, this is encouraged. Provision is adapted to nurture these. Pupils teach each other about their own cultures, beliefs and religions. This helps bring relevance and a real-life perspective to their learning, promoting engagement, understanding and tolerance.

Staff guide pupils well when navigating the next steps in their education. Careers education is well structured. Pupils meet visitors from different jobs, learn about applications and interviews and take part in meaningful activities that build confidence and work habits. The school goes to great lengths to expose pupils to the wider world. This includes planning and organising trips that involve travelling on a plane. Nothing is considered to be too ambitious. There are no financial barriers to full involvement, as the school ensures that the cost of additional activities is funded by them. These opportunities help pupils to understand their place in the world more fully. They learn about their own responses to the wider world alongside fundamental British values. These efforts help pupils to be as prepared as possible for life in modern Britain.

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

Pupils feel welcome, understood and safe at Oakbridge. They talk openly about the positive difference that this school has made to their lives. Adults know pupils well and work closely

with families so that decisions reflect each child's needs and circumstances. This partnership helps pupils belong and take part in school life where they recognise what it feels like to thrive.

The school provides steady, caring routines that help pupils arrive ready to learn. Staff weave therapy and communication support into everyday activities so pupils can join in lessons, express themselves and build confidence. The curriculum is personalised. It focuses on securing the basics that many pupils have missed before joining the school. Classrooms are typically calm and purposeful. Staff respond to difficulties pupils might face in a predictable and respectful way. Pupils use agreed strategies to manage their feelings and return to learning. A small number of pupils still miss too much learning time when they take breaks to manage their emotions. Leaders are refining how they check this so they can spot patterns and adjust support.

Attendance is a key area of focus. Staff keep in daily touch with pupils who find school difficult and visit at home when needed. This helps many pupils attend more often than they did previously, although overall attendance is still below leaders' ambitions in this area. During the school day, pupils access a suitable range of activities that broaden their interests and life skills. Staff encourage pupils to contribute to school life and to try new things. Oakbridge helps pupils to feel more confident than in previous settings. Adults act quickly and compassionately if worries arise and this adds to the sense of calm and safety that pupils experience.

Pupils behave well - the school is calm and orderly and pupils feel safe. It prepares pupils well for their next stage of education and/or employment.

Next steps

• Leaders should embed consistently strong teaching in every class and in each subject so that pupils make swifter progress from their starting points.
• Leaders should continue to improve attendance, while sustaining a compassionate pupil-centred approach so pupils attend school more regularly.
• Leaders should ensure they have a clearer understanding of how and why pupils take time out of lessons, so that provision is adapted to minimise lost learning.

About this inspection

The chair of the proprietor body is Paul Brosnan.

The fees currently charged are £64,039.

The email address for the school is arcoakbridge@kedlestongroup.com

The school address is Church Lane, Birmingham, B20 2HL.

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.

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

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, the chair of the proprietor body and its regional director during the inspection. They also spoke to senior leaders in the school.

This school provides specialist education for up to 90 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and social emotional and mental health needs. There are currently 70 pupils on roll.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

The school has moved to a new site since its last inspection. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2025.

Executive Headteacher: Mick Simpson

Independent school standards

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

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1. Quality of education provided — Standards met

All standards have been met.

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2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils — Standards met

All standards have been met.

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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:
Keri Baylis, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Gareth Morgan, His Majesty's Inspector
Ann Pritchard, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

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

This data is from 27 January 2026

Total pupils

70

School capacity

90

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

70

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0

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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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