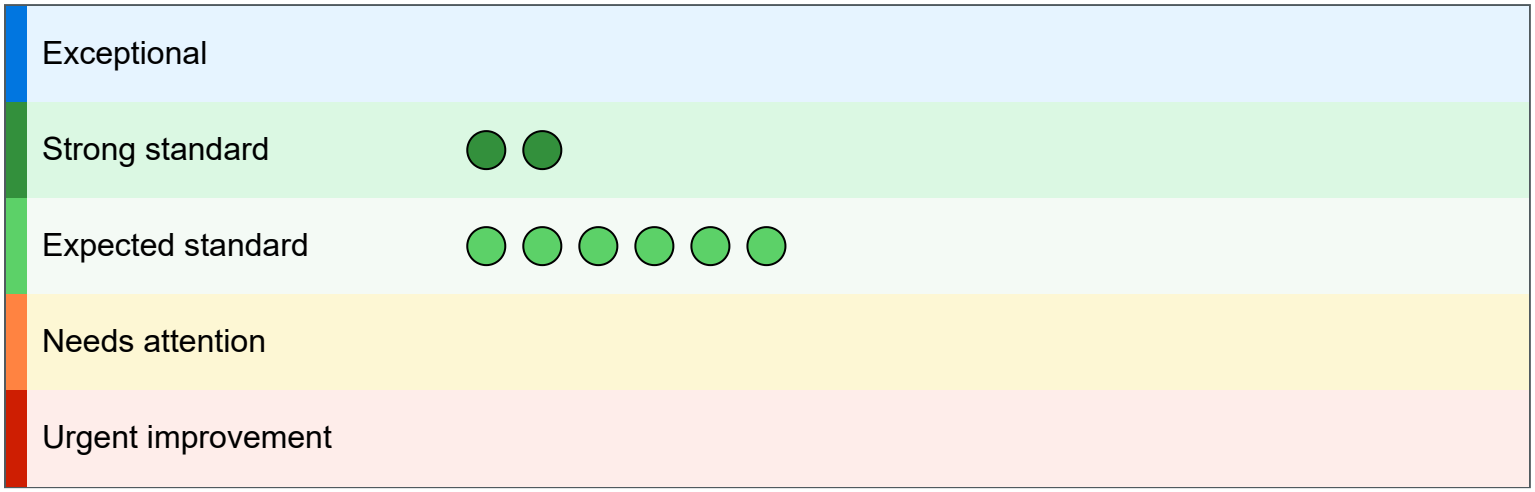
Kettering Buccleuch Academy

Address: Weekley Glebe Road, Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN16 9NS

Unique reference number (URN): 135966

Inspection report: 10 February 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.

Strong standard

Early years

Strong standard

Children benefit from an excellent start to their education. Leaders have a clear understanding of the context and varied starting points of children. They have carefully designed an early years curriculum to help children secure the important knowledge that they need. This includes, from the start, a deliberate focus on children learning to read and write using a phonics-based scheme. Staff ensure that daily routines help children develop their language and key vocabulary.

Staff engage in purposeful, high-quality interactions with children. They help children articulate what they know and understand by modelling, extending and developing their language and ideas. Staff integrate early writing and number seamlessly into meaningful experiences. They check children's understanding regularly. Staff use this information to shape and adapt the curriculum.

Staff understand children very well. Partnerships with parents and carers are highly productive. Staff use what parents tell them and their own knowledge to identify children who may have additional barriers to learning. Staff adjust the support given to children to fit their individual needs. This means that most children progress very well in all areas of the early years curriculum. They are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard

Leaders have ambitious expectations for all post-16 students. Carefully designed study programmes support these high ambitions for student success. Leaders designed a coherent curriculum to develop students' knowledge sequentially and cumulatively. Teachers take students' academic needs and career aspirations into account. They offer a wide range of A-level and other technical and applied qualifications.

Teachers have expert knowledge of the subjects they teach. They know their students well. As a result, they plan learning activities that build each student's knowledge and understanding skilfully. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make impressive progress through the curriculum from their starting points. Leaders know the quality of the curriculum and teaching in the post-16 provision. They assure themselves that the curriculum is being taught very well. As a result, most students usually achieve above national averages in national tests and examinations.

Staff give students considerable support and guidance to help them succeed in school and after they leave. Some students described leaders' detailed advice on apprenticeships, higher education and jobs as 'epic'. Work-related learning and careers education are well planned and relevant. Students contribute to the wider school. They volunteer as mentors and facilitators of masterclasses. Students are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. For example, many progress on to ambitious courses at university.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Leaders prioritise language and communication. This enables the youngest children to access the full curriculum and make sure that they are well prepared for Year 1. Pupils develop secure reading, writing and mathematics skills. They speak about their learning with growing confidence.

As pupils move through the school, they gain the knowledge and skills needed for success in all subjects. Overall, pupils' GCSE results are broadly in line with national averages. Historically, disadvantaged pupils have achieved as well as their peers. Leaders understand the reasons for the recent dip in disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. They have taken strategic action to secure pupils' sustained progress across the curriculum, which is having a positive impact. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Students in the post-16 provision are very well prepared for their next steps. Many continue into further study, training or employment.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils generally attend well. Attendance figures demonstrate that the school is broadly in line with national rates. Leaders have a clear strategy in place to tackle issues of poor attendance. Their mantra of 'be curious not furious' has been particularly effective in shaping how they work with parents and carers to identify any barriers to pupils' attendance. Careful analysis of attendance data ensures that the school can monitor the effectiveness of its actions for individual pupils or pupil groups.

Pupils behave well in school. Disruption to learning is rare. Staff apply school policies and procedures consistently. This is evident in lessons across the school and at social times. Staff remind pupils of their expectations of them and promote good attitudes to learning. Generally, there are positive relationships between staff and pupils. In primary, the introduction of 'conscious discipline' has led to pupils being able to be more reflective about their behaviour choices. Pupils are well supported to help manage their emotions. Leaders are clear that bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. However, in the secondary phase, some pupils are not convinced that the school's actions to address instances of discriminatory language are having the desired impact.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The school has a broad and ambitious curriculum that is appropriately sequenced. This enables pupils to recall and apply prior learning. It gives them the knowledge that they need for their next steps.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of the curriculum through regular checks of teaching and learning. They make decisions that bring about improvements for pupils. For example, they have introduced more opportunities across the curriculum to write at length.

For the most part, pupils benefit from high-quality teaching. Teachers typically follow a structured approach in lessons, so pupils know what is expected of them.

Teachers have the specialist knowledge they need to deliver their subjects. During lessons, teachers provide clear explanations. This enables pupils to access their learning successfully, particularly when the concepts that they are learning become more complex. Teachers adapt their lessons well to support disadvantaged pupils or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Reading is a high priority in the school. Leaders have ensured that the teaching of early reading is rigorous and carefully sequenced. It develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment. The school's approaches help pupils to catch up and keep up with the reading curriculum. Leaders have prioritised spelling, handwriting and mathematics. Extending pupils' language and vocabulary sits at the heart of the primary curriculum.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders understand the needs of pupils, including the most vulnerable. They commit to creating an inclusive culture. Leaders have clear and timely processes to identify pupils' barriers to learning. They know that pupils' needs change, and adapt the school's provision in response. The creation of the 'Sunflower' and 'Rainbow' rooms in the primary phase shows how support evolves as needs arise.

Teachers receive the information and training that they need about each pupil's barriers to learning. As a result, they know their pupils well and usually put helpful adaptations in place. Additional small-group support often helps pupils catch up with their peers so they can follow the same curriculum. Leaders monitor the impact of the school's support closely. When needed, they work with families and external agencies to secure extra help for pupils.

Leaders build support for disadvantaged pupils into the school's daily 'focus first' routines and teaching strategies. The pupil premium strategy to 'advantage the disadvantaged' links well with wider school priorities to reduce barriers to learning.

When it is right for individual pupils, leaders work with families to choose a suitable alternative provision. Staff stay closely involved to ensure that the provision continues to meet pupils' needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders understand the school's context, strengths and areas for improvement. When leaders identify aspects of their work that fall below their high standards, they take action quickly and effectively. Trust regional leaders check the school's quality. This ensures that those in charge of governance stay well informed. These checks help the school stay focused. Support from trust leaders and governors also plays a key role. Together, they ensure that all pupils get a high-quality education. Trust leaders and governors are knowledgeable about their statutory duties and carry them out effectively. They assure themselves that they use resources effectively. They support and challenge the school's leaders effectively. For example, they prioritise the strategic vision of 'advantaging the disadvantaged' in the school improvement plan.

Leaders demonstrate consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct. They have created a culture of high expectations. They act in the best interest of all pupils. This is clearly seen in the purposeful steps leaders have taken to reduce barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils.

Staff know that their wellbeing and professional development are a priority. Staff value the professional learning they receive from the school, the trust and from pursuing wider leadership qualifications. For example, leaders hear their voice when they make decisions about training and professional development. Leaders consider the workload of staff. They have ensured that staff can work in a flexible way, which many appreciate.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The school has constructed a carefully planned, age-appropriate personal development programme. This provides all pupils with valuable life experiences. Pupils are generally well prepared for life outside of school. The school teaches them the knowledge they need to lead healthy and safe lives, including learning how to keep safe online. There is a range of strategies in place to support pupils' mental wellbeing. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of sex education and healthy relationships. The personal, social and health education curriculum responds to any ongoing needs that leaders identify from the local area.

The school has a strong drive to develop 'the whole person' through its whole-school approach to character education. Pupils are expected to show courage and care as they contribute to their school and to society. They are encouraged to try new things, to persist in the face of difficulty, to work independently and develop teamwork. Pupils know that the school aligns its values with tolerance, diversity and respect. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught about values, different worldviews and diversity in modern Britain. Pupils understand the importance of valuing difference. However, pupils need a deeper understanding of fundamental British values and different beliefs to fully grasp what these mean in modern society.

There is a wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' talents and interests. Pupils generally speak highly of these, especially in the primary phase. The school promotes these enrichment opportunities to increase participation from all groups of pupils. Pupils appreciate these opportunities to nurture new talents and interests and to develop their confidence and resilience.

The school's careers education prepares pupils well for future education, employment or training. Pupils have meaningful visits with local employers and higher education providers. These increase pupils' aspirations for what they can do in the future. Tailored advice enables pupils, including those who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, to understand the steps they need to take to achieve their ambitions.

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

There are very positive starting and end points at Kettering Buccleuch Academy. Children in the early years get off to a flying start and students in the post-16 provision are very well prepared for their next steps. Pupils across the school generally attend well.

Warm, respectful relationships between staff and pupils are noticeable. This creates a positive and nurturing atmosphere, particularly in the primary phase. Staff know pupils well. Pupils know that staff will support them if they have any worries or concerns. Staff have high expectations of behaviour, and pupils respond by being polite and respectful towards each other. Bullying is rare, and generally pupils are confident that staff will sort out any incidents that occur. Pupils' conduct around the school is largely calm and orderly. Students in the post-16 provision experience excellent relationships with staff and their peers, reflecting the positive culture of the school.

Most pupils enjoy their learning. They make secure progress from their starting points, including those with additional barriers to learning. The school provides for these barriers effectively and meets pupils' needs well. This enables them to feel part of the day-to-day life of the school.

Pupils engage in their lessons well. High-quality teaching builds their understanding of the subjects they study. As a result, pupils typically achieve in line with national expectations and are well prepared for their next steps in education.

Many pupils, and students in the post-16 provision, take on leadership roles. This enables them to contribute positively to the school community. These experiences help to develop their confidence. Pupils contribute to the local community through charitable work. This includes helping to run the school's food and clothing bank. The personal development programme helps pupils' understanding of the world around them. Pupils have access to opportunities, experiences and clubs that develop their talents and interests. They value these and make use of what is available.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values and different worldviews to better equip them for life in modern society.
- Leaders need to ensure that their actions to tackle some pupils' use of discriminatory language result in all pupils understanding and respecting one another's differences, so that all pupils feel equally valued and respected.

About this inspection

This school is part of United Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dame Reena Keeble.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the principal, the head of primary, other members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinators, two regional directors from the trust and the chair of the academy trust during the inspection.

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 makes use of 2 alternative provisions, including 1 that is unregistered.
The school no longer has a Hearing Impairment Unit on site.
The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The principal took up their post in January 2026.

Principal: Chloe Buckenham

Lead inspector:
Dave Gilkerson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Sally Wicken, Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Long, Ofsted Inspector
Neil Wilkinson, Ofsted Inspector
Halil Tamgumus Tamgumus, Ofsted Inspector
Helen Loader, His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Wilson, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,851
Well above average

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.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,520
Above average

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.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

26.21%
Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 28.9%

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

3.24%
Close to average

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.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.99%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Above 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

HI - Hearing Impairment

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

Key stage 2

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	65%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	76%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	70%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	75%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	73%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average

Key stage 4

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	45.4%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	51.1%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53.4%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	48.3	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50.7	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	53.0	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.52	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.58	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Key stage 2

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	48%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	48%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	70%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	65%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	48%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	52%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	59%	Close to average

Key stage 4

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	21.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	37.8%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	34.8	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.6	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43.2	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.04	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.03	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	48%	68%	-20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	48%	69%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	67%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	46%	66%	-20 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	71%	80%	-9 pp
2024/25 (revised)	70%	81%	-11 pp
2023/24 (final)	77%	80%	-3 pp
2022/23 (final)	65%	78%	-13 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	53%	78%	-24 pp
2024/25 (revised)	48%	78%	-30 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	78%	-20 pp
2022/23 (final)	54%	77%	-24 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25 (revised)	52%	81%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	54%	79%	-26 pp
2022/23 (final)	62%	79%	-18 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	21.3%	53.1%	-31.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	30.8%	53.1%	-22.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	37.8%	52.4%	-14.7 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	34.8	50.4	-15.6
2023/24 (final)	38.6	50.0	-11.4
2022/23 (final)	43.2	50.3	-7.1

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.04	0.16	-0.20
2022/23 (final)	-0.03	0.17	-0.19

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	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	88%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	92%	93%	Average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2021 leavers (revised)	91%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	34.79	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.71	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	37.35	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

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	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	6.9%	8.1%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.5%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.9%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	16.9%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	19.1%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	20.2%	26.5%	Below

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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