



Wixams Academy

Address: Green Lane, Wixams, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK42 6BA

Unique reference number (URN): 144595

Inspection report: 3 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Despite some variation in how well pupils are supported, pupils typically achieve well across the curriculum. In most subjects, pupils build their knowledge effectively. Pupils and students in the post-16, generally produce high-quality work. Where the curriculum is working really well, for instance in English, this is reflected in pupils' outcomes in national tests and examinations. The English and mathematics combined 4+ grade for all pupils is above the national average. The gap between pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils nationally is narrowing. Pupils build important knowledge for future learning, particularly in reading. Pupils enjoy reading and books are valued.

In the post-16, student achievement continues to improve. Due to a small number of students, the published data does not show the individual stories of success. Most students achieve well from their starting points, not just in their qualifications. They move on to a range of appropriate destinations, such as university, further education, training or employment

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have made improvements to the curriculum. It is ambitious and carefully designed. It is well sequenced and supports pupils to build their knowledge over 5 years of study. For those students that stay on in post-16, the curriculum provides the necessary building blocks for future success. Behind this lies the schools 'core principles' of how the subjects should be taught. Staff development supports teachers well to develop their knowledge of the most effective ways to teach. Teachers show pupils clear examples to help explain difficult ideas. A focus on key subject-specific vocabulary ensures pupils are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need for future learning. Staff check pupils' learning carefully to identify those who may need further help with reading. On the whole, interventions support pupils to catch up.

Mostly, staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively with their learning. This is due to the training staff receive from leaders. New information about pupils' needs is used broadly well to make reasonable adjustments or adapt learning appropriately. Sometimes, staff are still developing an understanding of the new documentation and there are instances when pupils are not supported as well as they should be.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders continue to improve the school since the previous inspection. As a result of leaders' actions, key aspects of the school, such as the curriculum and pupil behaviour, are markedly different from before. This is because leaders carefully planned and put in place what was needed for sustainable change.

Leaders worked effectively with the trust and other organisations to source a professional learning programme and support for staff. This professional learning programme ensures

staff develop their expertise further in key areas, such as the curriculum. Consequently, staffing has stabilised and staff wellbeing is positive. Staff are predominantly on board with the changes needed to make the school better.

Trustees continue to support and challenge leaders. Trustees are experienced and know the school well. Leaders, including the trust, understand what is working and what needs to be better. This includes improving the school's approach to inclusion. As a result of leaders' actions, processes are beginning to improve. Despite this, leaders know this is not good enough for all pupils. Leaders continue to improve communication and build bridges with parents and the local authority. Leaders have appropriately identified the challenges ahead. They have already secured funding and support to help them on this journey.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

A well considered personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is in place. This is appropriately sequenced from Year 7 through to Year 13 and taught with increasing effectiveness. Well-considered resources support pupils to build their understanding of important topics, such as relationships education, emotional wellbeing and careers. Pupils have a developing understanding of fundamental British values and the protected characteristics, such as disability and race. Pupils enjoy the debate and discussion in lessons about the topics they study. Key messages are further reinforced through tutor periods and assemblies. Tutor periods also reinforce the behaviour curriculum. This supports pupils to learn about the importance of perseverance, hard work and kindness.

The PSHE curriculum is adapted around emerging needs or local issues. For instance, leaders work closely with the local police to teach pupils about the dangers of knife crime. Consequently, pupils have a secure understanding about risks to themselves online and offline. Pastoral support is becoming more effective as leaders learn what works for pupils and the help pupils need to be successful. For example, external agencies support pupils with mental health needs.

An effective careers education programme threads through the school, including in the post-6. Pupils learn about various careers and get valuable meaningful employer engagement and work experience. Leaders ensure pupils who are disadvantaged get further mentoring or advice should they need it. By the end of Year 11, pupils move on to a range of suitable destinations, including the school's own post-16.

A range of suitable clubs, visits and experiences enable pupils to develop their interests and talents. From well-resourced sporting facilities to a range of drama productions, the options available are a strength of the school. Clubs are well attended. Leaders ensure no one misses out. They have started to track participation to ensure all pupils have an opportunity to do something different.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders continue to refine and improve the curriculum in the post-16. Leaders ensure an effective study programme is in place and that students can study a suitable range of subjects. The curriculum is typically taught well. Students benefit from the small class sizes

and tailored support. Leaders ensure teachers have the development and expertise to teach their subjects well. Student achievement continues to improve with most students progressing well from their various starting points. Due to small numbers in the post-16, national figures do not show the full positive picture of achievement. All students in the post-16 move on to appropriate destinations, such as universities, apprenticeships and workplaces.

Students enjoy attending the post-16. Leaders know the needs of students well and put in place effective support for those who need it. For instance, they receive extra tuition or pastoral guidance. The post-16 is a positive community. Students are fully involved in school life. They take their leadership roles seriously. Leading the junior leadership team enables students to make a difference, working with leaders to improve the school. Effective careers provision continues here, where students effectively learn about the options available to them outside of school life.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Key groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who are disadvantaged, do not attend well enough. Over time, for these groups of pupils, overall attendance has declined and their persistent absence has increased. Some pupils still have unresolved barriers to better attendance. Leaders' recent actions have only just begun to reverse this downward trend. Overall, attendance is close to the national average. However, some pupils are missing out on improved school life.

Leaders' actions to improve behaviour are having a positive impact. A carefully thought out behaviour curriculum effectively teaches pupils about the importance of kindness and respect. Staff are now using the behaviour systems with increasing consistency and pupils notice the positive difference. Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. Leaders use behaviour information well to spot patterns in poor behaviour. They put in place effective support for pupils or make adjustments to the curriculum. Suspensions continue to reduce as pupils learn from their behaviour. Serious incidents are dealt with effectively. When bullying or discrimination happens, it is typically dealt with well. Staff receive improved information about pupils' needs so they can access effective pastoral or emotional support.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Some pupils' needs are not identified promptly and, therefore, they are not supported well enough. This creates barriers for pupils to be successful with school life, for instance, with regular attendance. This has caused frustration for some parents, who have raised concerns with the school and local authority.

However, leaders have quickly put in place a plan for improvement. Leaders effectively review documentation, such as pupils' individual targets. They have improved documentation outlining pupils' varying needs. This includes personal education plans for pupils who are known to social care. Teachers, for instance, get better information about

how to support pupils in lessons. Leaders use additional funding with increasing effectiveness. Mathematics and reading interventions support pupils to catch up with their peers. This is starting to have a positive impact on how well pupils achieve. Alternative provision is generally used effectively. There is more work to do, however, to ensure all pupils that need it access effective help and support. Some pupils have not felt the benefit of the recent improvements leaders have put in place. Leaders have organised further staff training, but this is yet to make a difference.

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

Pupils benefit from the improvements that leaders have made. They follow an ambitious curriculum and enjoy learning a range of different subjects. Improved teaching supports most pupils to learn well. The school is a growing positive community due to the improved behaviour culture, where pupils are safe. Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Typically, pupils behave well. In classes, pupils focus on their learning with little disruption. Around the school, pupils are generally respectful to adults and each other. Pupils understand and live by the values of 'kindness' and 'hard work'. Pupils trust adults to sort out their concerns. Serious incidents, such as any bullying, are dealt with effectively.

Many pupils value the improved support they get in class. Students in the post 16, in particular, benefit from small class sizes and individualised help and guidance. While many pupils get the help and support they need, some still do not. Leaders have recently improved how staff identify and support pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. However, this is not yet having the intended impact. Barriers to pupils' success are not fully reduced and so these pupils find school life harder. They do not attend as often as they should.

There are a wide range of clubs that enhance school life for pupils, including for those students in the sixth form. Pupils try something different like crochet or participate in a range of well-resourced sports. Post-16 students are proud of their leadership roles and the opportunity to improve the school. They are positive role models for younger pupils. The junior leadership team and new school council builds a sense of community. The revitalised personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is preparing pupils well for life beyond the school. Pupils learn about important topics, such as how to manage their finances or how to form respectful relationships with each other.

Next steps

- Leaders should further embed the improvements to the school's approach to inclusion, including how staff access information and training, so pupils' needs and barriers to success are accurately identified and effectively addressed.
 - Leaders should improve attendance for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.
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About this inspection

The school is part of the Knowledge Schools Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ian Hunter, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Suzanna Hobart.

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 chief executive officer, trust leaders, the headteacher, senior leaders, the chair of governors, trustees, staff and pupils during the inspection.

Inspectors reviewed the findings of the parent, staff and pupil Ofsted online surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

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 school uses 2 alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Nathaniel Wilson

Lead inspector:

Damian Loneragan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jonathan Ferstenberg, Ofsted Inspector


Suzanne Thrower, Ofsted Inspector

Claire Robins Robins, Ofsted Inspector

Nik Patel, 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 3 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

933

Close to 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

1,750

Well 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)

21.10%

Below 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

3.32%

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

10.50%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below 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)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

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)	52.4%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	49.7%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50.9%	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)	47.5	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46.1	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47.6	46.3	Close to average

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)	0.23	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.19	-0.03	Close to average

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.

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)	30.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	26.3%	25.2%	Close to average

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)	35.5	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.9	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38.9	35.0	Close to average

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)	-0.31	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.00	-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' 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)	30.0%	53.1%	-23.1 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	33.3%	53.1%	-19.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	26.3%	52.4%	-26.1 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)	35.5	50.4	-14.9
2023/24 (final)	37.9	50.0	-12.1
2022/23 (final)	38.9	50.3	-11.4

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)	-0.31	0.16	-0.48
2022/23 (final)	0.00	0.17	-0.17

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)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	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)	25.05	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	25.30	34.38	Below

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)	-0.2	0.0	Below

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)	9.0%	8.1%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.9%	9.0%	Close to average

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)	24.4%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	24.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	22.0%	26.5%	Close to average

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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