

City of Norwich School, An Ormiston Academy

Address: Eaton Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR4 6PP

Unique reference number (URN): 141269

Inspection report: 30 June 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.

Strong standard ●

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

This school benefits from long-term, stable leadership. The headteacher and leaders are clear, consistent and purposeful in the way they lead the school. Their decisions are driven by what is best for pupils. Staff share a clear commitment to continually reflecting on and improving the school to provide the best possible experience for pupils. Staff enjoy working at the school and remain in post.

Leaders carefully prioritise areas of the school that do not yet meet the ambitious standards they have set. They evaluate all aspects of provision effectively. Leaders are proactive and relentless in driving improvement for all pupils, including those who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing.

Staff benefit from well-considered development and training. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, partly because of high-quality professional learning. Leaders protect time for staff to collaborate with colleagues and share new ideas. Staff are highly positive about the way leaders consider their workload while continuing to improve the school.

Trustees and governors have the skills and knowledge required for their roles. For example, many have extensive sector expertise and all complete comprehensive training. Rigorous systems support and challenge leaders. Governors ask probing and constructive questions, which contribute to meaningful improvements across the school. Central trust staff support leaders in their work, and cross-trust collaboration is effective. Leaders work with other schools, organisations and professionals to ensure that the school remains outward-facing.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils are typically taught well, make progress and produce work that reflects their starting points and meets their teachers' expectations. As a result, pupils' outcomes in national tests are in line with those of their peers nationally. The school prioritises improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This work is beginning to have an impact.

Pupils generally demonstrate a secure grasp of the knowledge and skills expected for their age. Most remember what they learn over time, although this is not always consistent. Pupils who start secondary school without a strong foundation in key areas, such as reading accurately and fluently, receive support to help them catch up with their peers.

Pupils are well prepared for their next stages of education, employment or training. Leaders ensure that all pupils develop the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to progress beyond school.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance is a priority. Creating a sense of belonging is central to leaders' oversight of this area. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the barriers to attendance that many pupils face. They establish clear expectations and ensure that attendance is everyone's responsibility. Leaders use attendance data to identify patterns and target support for individual pupils and groups. Their actions lead to modest improvements in attendance and reductions in persistent absence.

Leaders act decisively to improve pupils' behaviour. They establish clear routines and consistent expectations, creating a calmer, more purposeful learning environment. The school's values of 'prepared, punctual, participate and polite' underpin the behaviour system. All pupils and staff know and understand these values. As a result, behaviour improves significantly. There are fewer incidents of disruptive behaviour, fewer repeat incidents and a marked reduction in suspensions. The support put in place by the school's additional learning team helps some vulnerable pupils regulate their behaviour. Bullying is rare and when it occurs, staff deal with it quickly and effectively. The school promotes an inclusive culture, where discrimination and harassment are not tolerated.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Teachers and leaders have designed a well-thought-out curriculum in each subject area. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and identify the most important knowledge that pupils need. They teach new ideas in a logical order so that learning builds over time.

Pupils typically enjoy their lessons. For the most part, expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Where this is the case, the use of subject-specific vocabulary helps pupils produce high-quality work. Purposeful questioning helps pupils process and understand new information. However, this is not the case in every lesson. Sometimes, teachers miss opportunities to deepen pupils' learning.

Pupils are attentive in lessons and learning is free from disruption. Positive relationships between pupils and teachers create a culture in which pupils feel comfortable contributing, even when they get things wrong. As a result, most pupils participate actively in their lessons. Staff use the information they hold to ensure that pupils with barriers to learning can access the curriculum. Across the curriculum, activities help pupils improve their reading. Teachers generally provide feedback that helps pupils refine their ideas and deepen their understanding. Pupils agree that teachers help them do their best.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school has created an inclusive culture. Leaders' vision of 'Excellence in All' means that the school has high expectations for every pupil, including those who face barriers to learning. Systems identify needs quickly and accurately. Where necessary, leaders provide additional support and interventions.

Staff consult parents, carers and pupils about how teachers can best support them. Many of the agreed strategies are effective, but some are too general. As a result, some pupils do

not receive the precise learning support that would help them most. In class, teachers adapt activities so that everyone can complete the tasks set. Pupils who struggle to read or write receive the extra help they need. As a result, they make progress.

Staff maintain close oversight of pupils, who are known, or were previously known, to social care. They work closely with families and other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe, both in and outside school. Leaders ensure that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used well to provide effective support. The school uses alternative provision, when it is in a pupil's best interests. Where it is used, leaders carefully consider the provider and match it to the pupil's needs.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise personal development and wellbeing. They implement a clear, coherent strategy that integrates academic and pastoral support with a wealth of enrichment opportunities. The personal, social, health and economic education programme emphasises themes, such as respect, inclusion and online safety.

The personal development programme is broad and well planned. Pupils generally understand the fundamental British values of democracy and the rule of law. Assemblies and a range of activities develop their spiritual and cultural awareness. Pupils understand relationships, consent and health, as well as both online and offline risks to their wellbeing. They recall learning about equality, inclusion and misogyny. They understand the school's expectations regarding the importance of respecting everyone.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including clubs and trips, which help them develop confidence, character and new interests. Many participate in these activities, especially those linked to music. The school provides positive opportunities for pupil leadership. Older pupils mentor younger pupils, support activities, such as the breakfast club, and act as ambassadors across the school. These roles help them develop responsibility.

Pastoral care and the focus on pupils' wellbeing are significant strengths of the school. Trusting relationships between staff and pupils characterise this provision. A mental health support team provides support and awareness days help everyone understand the challenges that some people face. Pupils report that they feel safe, supported and confident to raise concerns. Vulnerable pupils speak positively about the wellbeing and mental health support they receive. As a result, they feel part of the school community.

The school offers a well-developed careers programme. Pupils receive advice and guidance and hear from a range of local employers and education providers. As a result, they are well equipped for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders create an inclusive sixth form that is popular with students. The post-16 curriculum is broad and attracts many students from other local schools. Sixth-form lessons generally reflect high expectations, well-planned learning and effective academic support. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to explore topics in greater depth. Sixth-form students generally achieve well and make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Leaders are ambitious for outcomes to improve further. They maintain secure oversight of all aspects of the sixth-form provision.

Students are articulate, reflective and positive about their experience. They value the inclusive post-16 provision. They appreciate the independence and responsibilities available to them. They receive helpful form sessions on sexual health and relationships. They view pastoral support and wellbeing as strengths of the school. Many take on student leadership roles and support younger pupils in the lower school.

Students receive careers advice and guidance, including support with university applications, apprenticeships and employment opportunities. University visits, external speakers and a structured personal development programme enhance this guidance. As a result, students are informed, confident and well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

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

Pupils are happy at this caring, inclusive school. Pupils' wellbeing is a high priority. The school has high expectations for all pupils, including those with barriers to learning. Staff are ambitious for everyone to succeed. As a result, pupils develop a clear sense of belonging and feel part of the school community. Generally, most pupils, therefore, attend well. Bullying is rare, but if an issue arises, pupils know who to report their concerns to. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve issues because they know their teachers care. Consequently, pupils feel safe.

The school has high expectations for behaviour. Pupils agree that positive behaviour in lessons enables them to focus on their learning. Behaviour around the site is orderly. Music is an important feature of the school. Pupils' piano playing in communal areas enhances the calm environment at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. Staff identify pupils who need additional support and provide the help they need. This means that everyone can complete the tasks set. Teachers plan activities that help pupils remember what they learned previously. As a result, pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of what they learn. Their work shows that pupils, including those with barriers to learning, make progress through the curriculum. They develop the knowledge and skills they need for their next steps in education or employment.

The school offers a wealth of pupil leadership opportunities, clubs and trips. Pupils see these as strengths of the school and many participate. The personal development programme prepares pupils well for later life. They learn about the world of work. Pupils have a secure understanding of topics, such as healthy relationships, drug and alcohol misuse and online safety. They learn to respect and celebrate difference. This means that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to improve pupils' attendance by ensuring that their attendance strategies lead to sustained improvements for identified individuals and groups.
 - Leaders should continue their work to secure greater consistency in the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers routinely provide appropriate challenge, deepen pupils' understanding through effective questioning and implement support strategies for pupils with barriers to learning with greater precision.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of Ormiston Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tom Rees, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julius Weinburg.

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.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders during the inspection. Conversations were also held with the chair of the Board of Trustees, the chair and vice chair of the local governing body, the CEO and trust regional director.

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 currently makes use of 4 alternative provisions that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Jo Philpott

Lead inspector:

Cathy Barr, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Duncan Ramsey, Ofsted Inspector

Sally Garrett, Ofsted Inspector

Bessie Owen, His Majesty's Inspector

Emma Mason, Ofsted Inspector

Teri-Leigh Jones, 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 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,708

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

1,755

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

28.46%

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

1.99%

Below 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

13.06%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well 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 (final)	52.9%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46.1%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	51.7%	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 (final)	50.4	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48.6	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50.6	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)	-0.09	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.28	-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.

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 (final)	35.4%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	6.8%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	20.7%	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 (final)	41.1	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	28.8	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	34.1	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)	-1.06	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.48	-0.57	Close to average

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 (final)	35.4%	53.1%	-17.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	6.8%	53.1%	-46.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	20.7%	52.4%	-31.7 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 (final)	41.1	50.4	-9.3
2023/24 (final)	28.8	50.0	-21.2
2022/23 (final)	34.1	50.3	-16.2

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)	-1.06	0.16	-1.22
2022/23 (final)	-0.48	0.17	-0.64

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 (revised)	95%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	93%	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 (final)	34.83	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.73	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.55	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 (final)	0.0	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 (3 term)	9.0%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.1%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.2%	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 (3 term)	22.6%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	29.0%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	23.6%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright