

Notton House Academy

Address: 28 Notton, Lacock, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 2NF

Unique reference number (URN): 144286

Inspection report: 21 April 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 ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The extensive personal development and wellbeing programme is a strength of the school. It is ambitious and woven into school life. Leaders continuously review the personal development programme to ensure it meets pupils' needs. Pupils feel a sense of belonging because they know that staff care for them. The pastoral and therapeutic offer is highly effective and tailored to meet the needs of pupils.

Leaders and staff have a deep understanding of pupils' needs, aspirations and views. Pupils work towards preparation for adulthood. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, develop a deep knowledge of all areas of the personal, social, health and economic education programme. The relationships and sex education and health education curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge they need. For example, pupils learn about puberty and consent. They understand the importance of managing online risks and positive relationships. Fundamental British values such as democracy, respect and equality are carefully threaded through many aspects of school life.

Leaders provide pupils with a rich range of opportunities beyond the classroom. These broaden pupils' experiences and interests. The menu of enrichment activities is shaped by pupil voice. This leads to high participation and positive outcomes. These activities give pupils the opportunity to try new things and develop skills they might not otherwise gain. For example, pupils make visits to local lakes to develop their understanding of water safety. They are supported to build resilience, confidence and co-operation through outdoor learning. Pupils secure the essential knowledge to stay safe and healthy, both emotionally and physically.

Preparation for adulthood and future pathways is a clear strength. Careers guidance is carefully tailored to pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes regular access to an independent careers adviser and meaningful real-world experiences. For example, learning in construction leads to further qualifications. This helps prepare pupils for life beyond school.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Leaders check pupils' starting points thoroughly when they join the school. They use this information to identify any gaps in pupils' reading, writing, mathematics and communication knowledge. Leaders provide pupils with a range of support strategies to help them to catch up. As a result, pupils demonstrate increasing understanding of foundational knowledge across all subjects. Leaders monitor progress closely. They accurately identify pupils who require additional help and intervene promptly. Typically, pupils are able to recall earlier learning and apply it to new tasks. Consequently, pupils secure ambitious outcomes from their starting points. They are well prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment.

Pupils are supported to develop essential life skills to prepare them for adulthood. Older pupils achieve a range of national accredited awards. These include GCSEs, entry level qualifications and vocational courses. Leaders ensure that pupils with a range of vulnerabilities receive effective support to reduce their barriers to learning. This supports pupils to achieve. Pupils taught off site or in alternative provision study programmes that match their needs and interests.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils often join the school with significant barriers to attendance. Despite this, leaders maintain high expectations. This has had an impact. Rates of attendance have risen over time. They are now in line with national expectations for specialist settings. Leaders have a meticulous approach to addressing barriers to attendance. They work with relentless determination alongside families and external agencies to remove these barriers. Leaders develop bespoke approaches to help pupils build positive attendance habits. For example, leaders have introduced breakfast club to ensure that pupils have a calm start to the day. Adaptations such as this have made a significant difference in increasing pupils' attendance.

Pupils' behaviour in school is typically purposeful. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour. They are supported to understand the impact of their actions on the feelings of others. This helps to embed a culture where bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. Consequently, pupils are able to build friendships, which supports constructive social times. Through bespoke sessions with trained staff, pupils work on their specific challenges. Pupils are helped to understand and recognise their own emotions. They are taught strategies to help themselves remain calm and focused. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour have reduced over time. Suspensions are used sparingly. Leaders ensure they are followed by thoughtful support so that pupils can return to school successfully.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares pupils for their next steps and adulthood. Pupils experience a suitably wide range of subjects. This breadth helps pupils enjoy learning and discover what interests them. Pupils develop knowledge across academic, creative and social areas.

In most subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to know and remember. Pupils make progress from their starting points and build on prior learning. However, in some subjects, leaders have not identified precisely the important knowledge pupils need to learn. Where this is the case, teaching does not enable pupils to build securely on prior learning.

Teachers make appropriate adaptations to learning for pupils to remove barriers to success when needed. Teaching provides opportunities for pupils to recall important knowledge. Staff address pupils' misconceptions. However, on occasion, what is known about pupils' learning is not used to inform future teaching. Consequently, some pupils move through the curriculum with ongoing gaps in their knowledge.

There is a sharp focus on reading. The school puts precise phonics support in place for those pupils who need to develop their reading fluency. Staff encourage pupils to read for

enjoyment. The school selects texts that complement the curriculum and extend pupils' usual reading diet. This ensures pupils develop confidence in reading a range of genres.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school's inclusion strategy has a palpable impact on pupils' readiness to re-engage in learning and attend school. Leaders identify pupils' individual needs carefully during a thorough admissions and review process. They ensure that staff have a clear understanding of pupils' starting points. This means pupils' needs are understood by the school, and pupils receive the right support.

Leaders make sure that any barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing are reduced. They design personalised, tailored strategies to support pupils' learning, behaviour and wider needs. For example, staff adapt routines and support pupils' learning through digital technology. This helps pupils to access learning successfully. Leaders review the impact of learning strategies on pupils' achievement to ensure that these approaches improve pupils' learning, engagement and wellbeing. Where necessary, they take appropriate action to strengthen these. For example, leaders are in the process of refining their evaluations to give them a clearer understanding of the impact on pupils' academic outcomes.

Leaders engage with families and external professionals to shape pupils' support and help them to access opportunities in the wider community. Leaders use additional funding, such as the pupil premium, to support disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils to access the curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure their decisions are always in the best interests of pupils. Leaders fully understand the school's context. They know what is working well and what actions are needed to refine their practice even further. This is because they have effective systems in place to check on all aspects of the school's work. For example, leaders have made improvements to the curriculum design of many subjects. Where there is more work to do to continue to drive school improvement forward, leaders address these purposefully.

Leaders are mindful of staff workload and wellbeing. They listen to staff and make concrete changes where needed. Generally, staff, including those at the start of their teaching careers, feel well supported. Typically, leaders ensure all staff benefit from high-quality professional learning programmes and support. This ensures that all staff have the expertise that they need to fulfil their roles effectively. Leaders also work closely with families and outside agencies. They ensure that pupils receive joined-up support that reflects their individual circumstances and needs.

The trust and local governors share leaders' ambition for pupils. All are aligned to the ethos of the school and have a detailed understanding of the school's strategic direction. Those responsible for governance are well aware of the contextual needs and vulnerabilities of the pupils who attend. The trust ensures that the school meets its statutory duties and provides

support and challenge to leaders. The trust's ongoing oversight adds strength to the process of school improvement.

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

Everyone is welcome at Notton House. Many pupils have had unsuccessful experiences in education before joining the school. Nevertheless, whenever new pupils join, they each get the help they need to settle in swiftly. Pupils are welcomed warmly. They benefit from trusting relationships with staff. They feel safe and are confident that staff will help them if they have any worries. Pupils typically attend well. The school's breakfast club helps pupils to start the morning calmly. Familiar routines give pupils the structure they need to focus and take part in learning.

Across the school, pupils progress well from their starting points. They are proud of their work, as well as the qualifications and awards they obtain. Typically, pupils enjoy their learning and are well prepared for their next steps. They know that the knowledge, confidence and skills that they develop at school will help them in the future.

Pupils generally socialise readily and form positive relationships with their peers. Bullying is dealt with promptly and taken seriously. Pupils understand behaviour expectations. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. Consequently, behaviour has improved over time.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online and in the community. They practise real-life skills through carefully planned opportunities such as budgeting and using public transport. These experiences help to build their independence. Pupils also benefit from a range of therapeutic support. This includes working with speech and language professionals and the education psychology service. Pupils are supported to reflect and develop self-expression. They manage their emotions and learn how to problem-solve. Pupils receive careers guidance and meet people from different workplaces. As a result, pupils are increasingly prepared for the next stage in their lives.

Pupils visit places of interest to develop their understanding of the wider world. For example, pupils visit the Houses of Parliament to deepen their understanding of democracy and the rule of law.

Next steps

- Leaders should identify the key curriculum content that pupils need to secure in all subjects, so that they can build their knowledge over time.
 - Leaders should ensure that the use of assessment identifies exactly what pupils have learned and any gaps in knowledge so that these can be addressed and pupils can excel from their starting points.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Alun Williams, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tony Wells.

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 senior leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, and other staff with responsibilities for safeguarding, inclusion, curriculum, attendance and behaviour. They met with members of the trust, including the chief executive officer and a representative of the chair of the trust board, as well as a representative of the local governance body.

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.

Inspectors only inspected the education provision at this school.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is a specialist setting for pupils with a range of social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The school currently makes use of 12 alternative provisions, including 11 that are unregistered

Headteacher: Michelle Reysenn

Lead inspector:

Liz Geller, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Paul Smith, 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

53

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.

School capacity

50

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

47.92%

What does this mean?

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

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

100.00%

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.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

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

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).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health

What does this mean?

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

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
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2023 leavers (provisional)	62%
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2022 leavers (revised)	S
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2021 leavers (revised)	75%
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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
2024/25 (2 term)	16.6%
2023/24 (3 term)	23.3%
2022/23 (3 term)	21.0%

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school
2024/25 (2 term)	42.9%
2023/24 (3 term)	50.0%
2022/23 (3 term)	71.4%

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.

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