

OA - Nene Valley

Address: Coalwharf Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE13 2FP

Unique reference number (URN): 142793

Inspection report: 9 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.

Exceptional ●

Inclusion

Exceptional ●

Inclusion is at the heart of everything that happens here. The impact of the school's work on pupils and their families is remarkable. Leaders and staff know pupils extremely well. They use highly effective systems to assess, identify and meet pupils' needs with precision and skill. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and many are disadvantaged, looked after or have a wide range of additional complex barriers and difficulties in their lives. Leaders quickly identify these barriers to attendance, learning, positive behaviour and emotional well-being. They put in place highly effective support for pupils without delay. This includes insightful use of additional funding well to enable pupils who are disadvantaged to receive the support and resources that they need to succeed. This is constantly reviewed to make sure that pupils receive the best possible support to help them to be successful in their next stage and futures.

The school provides a nurturing environment where pupils feel understood and ready to succeed. Staff develop highly impactful and positive relationships with pupils who often arrive here unable to trust adults. Through highly skilled support and interventions, pupils become self aware, confident and resilient. Pupils who were at risk of exclusion or not in education, employment or training, now attend school regularly, engage in learning and achieve well. The school's work has a lasting impact. Pupils are aspirational, develop self-belief and acquire the skills needed for successful futures.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve well from often very low starting points. Effective support helps pupils to secure crucial knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. This has improved their confidence. Pupils can now access the breadth of learning across the curriculum. Pupils' personal and academic achievement is high. Many arrive with poor attendance, low confidence and negative experiences of education. Through targeted and effective support, pupils develop resilience, independence and positive attitudes to learning. They begin to love learning and build aspirations for the future. Attendance and behaviour improve significantly for pupils.

Pupils attain well in a broad range of accreditations. This includes GCSEs and BTECs, giving pupils the academic and vocational knowledge needed for future success. As a result, pupils are extremely well prepared for further education and the future. They leave school with qualifications, something which seemed impossible to them before joining the school. They build the skills needed for future success. This includes having greater confidence, aspirations and an ability to work alongside others.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Pupils' behaviour across the school is calm, purposeful and positive. Leaders have established clear expectations for behaviour. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and skilfully. Staff know pupils extremely well and use highly effective strategies to support pupils' complex social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils feel safe here. They build excellent and meaningful relationships with staff and other pupils. Pupils start to love learning and develop highly positive attitudes to education. Any poor behaviour, including bullying or discrimination, is dealt with quickly and effectively. This is through clear and consistent consequences and targeted support and education for pupils. Behaviour incidents have reduced notably over time for pupils.

Attendance improves considerably for pupils from often very low starting points. Leaders identify all and every barrier to attendance for each pupil precisely. They work closely with pupils, families and often external agencies to provide effective and targeted help and support. Many pupils join the school with histories of severe absence and disengagement from education. Through highly effective pastoral support and strong relationships, pupils re-engage with education and attend far more regularly than in their previous schools. Even where pupils' attendance is below average, they have still massively increased their attendance, since joining the school, from very low starting points.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have developed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that consistently meets pupils' complex needs effectively. The curriculum has been carefully designed to prepare pupils well for their next stage, which it does. It has been thoughtfully created to rebuild pupils' confidence in learning across the curriculum and to become fluent in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders identify pupils' gaps in knowledge by checking pupils' knowledge as soon as they join this school. Information from these, and subsequent, checks is used precisely to match learning to pupils' needs and help them to build knowledge over time. Consequently pupils are able to access a wide range of accreditations before leaving.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Targeted support helps pupils to improve in their fluency and comprehension. This helps pupils to access learning successfully across curriculum subjects. Pupils also develop secure mathematical understanding and improve their writing over time.

Teaching is highly skilled and consistently adapted to meet pupils' needs. Staff know pupils extremely well. They use effective strategies to help pupils to engage positively in their learning. Teachers are highly knowledgeable about the curriculum subjects that they teach. They are also expert teachers of special educational needs and/or disabilities. They maintain high expectations and ambitions for pupils. They adapt learning precisely so that pupils can fill gaps in their knowledge, build on prior knowledge and succeed in the future.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

The leadership and governance of this school is excellent. Since the previous inspection, the appointment of the new headteacher and the school becoming fully established within

the trust, has led to rapid and sustained improvement. Leaders, the academy advisory board (AAB) and the trust share a clear vision for inclusion. They have high aspirations for these pupils and the community. They know the school exceedingly well. Consequently, the areas they identify as strengths and priorities are accurate, enabling them to constantly improve provision and outcomes for pupils. The trust and AAB provide targeted and highly effective support and challenge to school leaders. They maintain precise oversight of the whole provision, including safeguarding and inclusion.

Parents, carers and families are vital to this school. Leaders work highly effectively to strengthen relationships with them. This includes providing a range of accessible opportunities through the year for parents to get to know the school and see the impact of the support for their child. Parent voice during the inspection was clear that this is a school which transforms not only their child's life but theirs too.

Staff are proud to work here. They value the positive culture created by leaders and the care and compassion they receive. Wellbeing and workload are carefully considered by leaders. Staff feel listened to, supported and valued. Staff training is extensive and closely linked to the priorities of the school. Leaders at all levels are knowledgeable. They are driven by a common moral imperative to improve the lives of pupils and their families.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders place a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development and well-being. The personal development programme is carefully planned and closely matched to pupils' complex and diverse needs and vulnerabilities. Through personal, social, health and economics education and relationships and sex education, as well as individual pastoral sessions, pupils learn how to keep themselves and others safe. They learn about important areas such as consent, healthy relationships, mental health and exploitation. The programme has been carefully crafted to help pupils to make informed and safe decisions. There is a precise focus on helping pupils to understand mental health and their own needs. This has enabled pupils to become self aware and develop their own strategies to manage difficult situations. Staff create an environment in school where pupils feel confident to discuss sensitive issues and seek support where needed.

Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about different cultures, religions and other areas of diversity. They develop genuine respect for the differences and identities of others. Pupils learn about democracy and the importance of sharing their voice. They explore with staff in lessons and one to one interventions, the rule of law and equality, giving them the understanding that they need to be positive contributors to society. Pupils develop a greater sense of self awareness and empathy. They learn about the world beyond their local area and understand that everyone is different, and that this is something to be celebrated.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Staff have an in-depth understanding of each pupil. They provide expert targeted support that helps pupils to develop confidence and emotional regulation. Many pupils who previously struggled to trust adults or engage positively with others, develop excellent relationships and increasing independence over time.

Careers education, advice and guidance is well thought through. Pupils receive personalised guidance. They encounter employers and access vocational pathways linked

to their interests and aspirations. Pupils are well prepared for their next stages of education, employment, training and adulthood.

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

This school changes pupils lives. Pupils at this school feel safe, valued and understood. They join here with a wide range of complex needs, vulnerabilities and challenging or traumatic experiences. They come here with low confidence and low self belief, often having missed a lot of education or experienced highly disrupted education. Over time they rebuild trust in adults and develop positive relationships with others. They begin to enjoy learning and start to see a positive future for themselves.

Pupils achieve well because staff identify all of their barriers quickly. They provide expert and precise support at the right time. Consequently, pupils improve their reading, writing and mathematics knowledge and access a broad range of academic and vocational qualifications. Pupils develop confidence in lessons and engage positively and consistently through the school. They become self aware and able to plan for their future. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Pupils know that they belong here. They feel that sense of belonging. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm, respectful and supportive. Pupils who previously struggled with engaging in school life build the skills needed to take part in all that happens at the school. Subsequently, benefitting from what the school has to offer. Staff help pupils develop self confidence, resilience and independence. This is solidified through the range of wider experiences pupils take part in. All of which helps them to understand the world and prepare for adult life.

Pupils behave extremely well. They understand the school's high expectations. Staff provide consistent support to help pupils to manage their emotions and regulate their behaviour. Bullying and discrimination are dealt with quickly and effectively. Attendance of pupils improves dramatically from often extremely low starting points. This is because pupils feel safe and enjoy school. They trust that the adults around them only want the best for them.

Next steps

- Leaders and governors should ensure that curriculum implementation is continually reviewed and improved leading to sustained, positive outcomes for all pupils.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Olive Academies, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Vickers MBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phillip Whall.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other members of the leadership team, leaders from the trust's central team, a representative from the board of trustees, the chair and 2 other members of the academy advisory board, the deputy CEO and CEO of the trust, and a representative from the local authority, 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 school is an alternative provision, providing single or dual registered placements for pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health needs and other vulnerabilities.

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Since the previous inspection, the school appointed a new headteacher in 2023.

Headteacher: David Saunders

Lead inspector:

Nina Marabese, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Wayne Jarvis, 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 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

School capacity

52

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.

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
2022 leavers (revised)	S	93%	S
2021 leavers (revised)	S	94%	S

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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