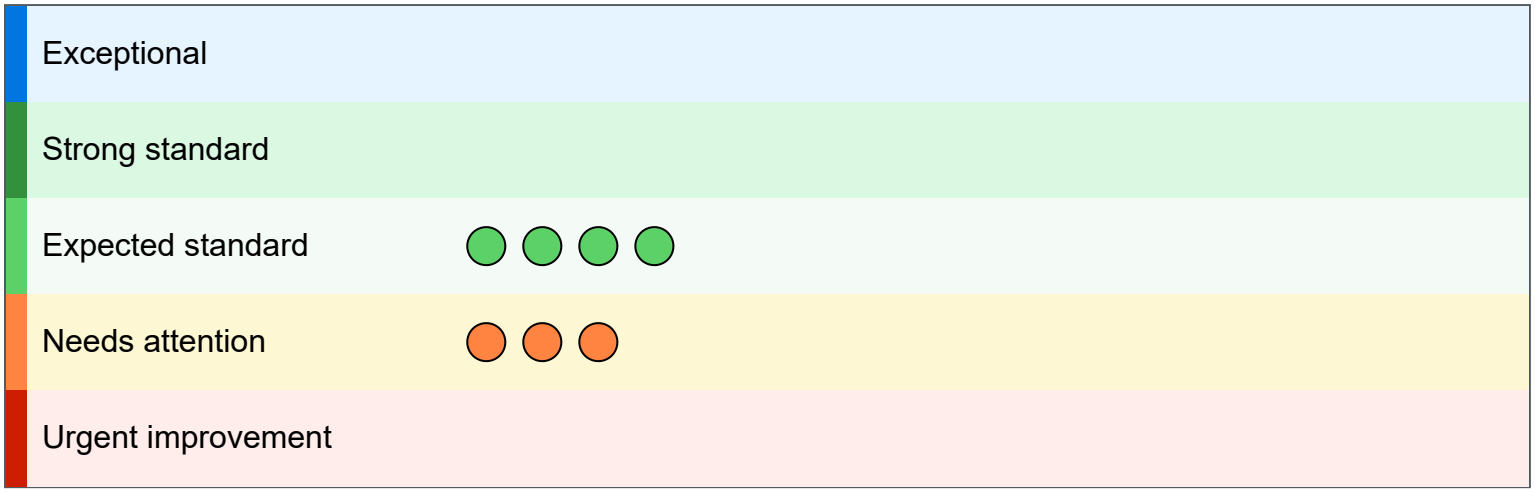
The Oxford Academy

Address: Sandy Lane West, Littlemore, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX4 6JZ

Unique reference number (URN): 148354

Inspection report: 10 March 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.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders are committed to understanding the diverse needs of pupils. They are adept at identifying the barriers to education that pupils may face. Leaders consider precisely how to help each pupil and how best to use a range of adaptation strategies. Pupil and family voices are prominent in pupils' plans, which are carefully designed and regularly reviewed.

Staff have a detailed understanding of each pupil in their class, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consistent classroom expectations help ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them in lessons and how teachers help them to achieve. Should staff have any concerns about a pupil, an expert panel considers how best to provide additional support, training or adaptations in class. Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and use this information accurately to plan both academic and pastoral support. As a result, pupils' barriers are directly addressed.

Additional funding contributes to a range of additional support for pupils. Alternative provision provides carefully tailored and impactful support to the pupils who will benefit the most. This has contributed to ensuring these pupils access education when they would otherwise be unable to do so.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders at all levels, and those responsible for governance, share a detailed and accurate understanding of the school's position. The actions that they have prioritised for school improvement are appropriate and meet statutory requirements. Leaders are systematic in the way that they check and analyse the impact of their actions. They are outward looking and engage agencies and experts to help ensure that changes are based in research and experience. Consequently, they are enacting steady and sustained improvement.

Leaders' very positive improvements in behaviour and the school’s now embedded learning culture are particularly noticeable. Other changes are having a positive impact, although some, such as improvements in pupils' attendance and their levels of achievement, are at an earlier stage.

Leaders act in the best interests of pupils, in particular the most vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff recognise the importance of their roles in helping to keep pupils safe and to provide a broad and effective education for all.

Staff are very positive about working at the school. They are proud of the work that they do and know how valuable a high-quality education is for improving pupils' life chances. Staff are well supported through an extensive in-school training programme. Their workload and wellbeing are carefully considered. When new teachers join the school, leaders ensure that they are welcomed and can contribute fully and consistently. Early career teachers receive the training and support to which they are entitled.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Pupils' wider education, including disadvantaged pupils, is systematic. Academic, personal and social education are interwoven. Respect and consideration of ethical issues are promoted throughout pupils' time at school. Relationships and sex education is age-appropriate and valued by pupils. Sessions about keeping safe, including both online and offline, are equally impactful. As a result, pupils are respectful and thoughtful, have a strong sense of right and wrong and are happy to debate ethical issues.

The school embraces its diversity. Pupils have a detailed understanding of fundamental British values and the differences that exist between themselves and others. They participate in student leadership and consider that their voice is heard. Pupils are proud to cite examples of where leaders have considered their views and have made changes as a result. This helps pupils to recognise the importance of democracy and to value their own agency.

Staff provide effective pastoral care to support pupils well. The most vulnerable pupils are known to staff, who keep a watchful eye on their progress and wellbeing. Leaders provide a wide range of support, including counsellors, a school nurse and a chaplain. Consequently, the school is able to provide bespoke support where needed. Pupils identify the ‘Wellbeing area' as one of the most important parts of the school because they recognise the help and reassurance that they can access, should they need to.

The school provides a wealth of wider opportunities for pupils, ranging from theatre performances and sporting events to study skills and trips. These help pupils to broaden their horizons.

Careers education is a strength of the school. From Year 7 onwards, pupils gain experience of a wide range of employment opportunities and learn about their prospects for further study. As a result, pupils are excited for the opportunities that their futures may hold.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard

The sixth-form curriculum is carefully tailored to students' needs. The innovative post-16 level 2 programme opens a door to A levels for students who may otherwise struggle to access post-16 study. Other qualifications are closely matched to local training and employment. Consequently, sixth-form students are highly motivated and appreciative of the chances that the school offers them.

Students are successful in their next steps, including studying at university and gaining entry onto highly competitive courses and apprenticeships. In many cases, these are opportunities that students were unaware of before benefiting from the impactful careers education.

Sixth-form teaching is now effective. Staff routinely check students' understanding. This means that students progress well through the curriculum, and gaps are identified and addressed. While teaching is benefiting from the same rigorous development as in the lower school, its impact is not yet showing in published outcomes.

The personal development curriculum matches the needs of students well. For example, students study additional qualifications, such as leadership and cyber security, which provide additional skills and equip them for both interviews and success in the workplace. Post-16 pastoral care is as thoughtful and accessible as for pupils in the lower school.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Leaders recognise the importance of raising achievement for all pupils. They are committed to doing so. Leaders have introduced a range of appropriate strategies, but it is too early to see the impact of this work at present. Consequently pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care, do not achieve as well as they should.

Within individual lessons, pupils do not progress as quickly as they could, meaning that, over time, they learn less than they should. This limits how ready pupils are for important events such as sitting national tests, for example GCSEs.

In national examinations, pupils' attainment remains well below national averages. While this is starting to improve in some areas, this is neither widespread nor secure, meaning pupils are not readied for their next steps and cannot access a full range of future options.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Too many pupils, including those who are vulnerable, do not attend school as regularly as they should. This limits how well these pupils learn and achieve, including their attainment in national examinations.

Leaders know that attendance needs to be better. They are innovative in how they provide support for pupils who need extra help to attend more. Additionally, leaders have thought carefully about how to make sure school is as inviting as possible, for example through careful uniform choices and a welcoming, safe environment. Consequently, there are signs that attendance is starting to improve, although this is not a consistent trend.

Behaviour across the school is now very positive. Pupils are calm and respectful, with positive attitudes to learning. They know exactly what is expected of them. Leaders ensure that staff know and use behaviour processes, which pupils consider to be fair and impactful, consistently.

Pupils are proud of the school's very diverse character, and they appreciate the way they are taught about respect and positive behaviour. In particular, the use of derogatory language is now rare, and very few pupils worry about bullying. Should either of these issues occur, pupils know that staff will deal with them quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

While leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of curriculum and teaching, their actions have not had the desired impact yet. The curriculum design does not support all pupils to learn as much as they can, as quickly as they can. Additionally, there is variability in the quality of teaching, including how well teachers check pupils' knowledge across the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not know and remember as much as they should.

While the school's new teaching approach is not yet as embedded as leaders would like, it is understood by pupils and is already improving lesson consistency. This has helped to dramatically improve both pupils' behaviour and participation in lessons. As a result, lessons are undisturbed, and pupils enjoy their learning.

The subjects offered suit the needs of pupils, including for those who need extra help with reading and developing foundational knowledge. Teachers' subject knowledge allows them to teach confidently. Despite this, the way the curriculum is delivered is not helping pupils to learn as quickly as possible. In some lessons, learning is slowed. Additionally, while checking of pupils' knowledge is widespread, it is not used in a way that ensures gaps in knowledge and misconceptions are addressed.

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

Pupils are happy in school. They feel known and liked by their teachers. This helps to build the school's sense of cohesion and belonging. However, not all pupils attend school as regularly as they should. This means that they miss out on important learning and experiences.

Staff offer a warm welcome to pupils as they arrive in the morning. They know pupils well and greet many individually by name. Pupils appreciate the way staff help them to be ready for the day's learning, for example through providing the equipment pupils need, or by providing support and reassurance where necessary.

Lessons are calm. The school's well-established teaching routines mean that pupils know what to expect and how to behave. Pupils acknowledge how much calmer lessons are now compared to previous years. However, while the school has raised both the quality of teaching and how pupils with additional needs are supported, and pupils are now learning more, they are not learning as well as they should. This means that they are not as prepared for their next steps as they could be.

Pupils feel safe at school and know how to report concerns. They value how leaders have focused on ensuring that pupils treat each other well. Pupils know that bullying is rare and that their peers are respectful of their diversity. Should pupils have any concerns, they know precisely who to tell.

Pupils are inspired by the careers education that they receive. They learn about local employment types and further education opportunities. Many sixth-form students have exciting and ambitious future plans informed by their impactful careers education. Similarly,

Year 11 pupils are confident about their plans for their next steps, with increasing numbers choosing to join the school's sixth form.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to increase pupils' rates of attendance, including for those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers use ongoing checks on pupils' learning consistently well and adapt the curriculum to ensure all pupils learn as well as they should.
- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching is embedded across the school, including in the sixth form, so that pupils' achievement increases, including for those who are disadvantaged.

About this inspection

This school is part of River 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, Paul James, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeremy Long.

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 headteacher, senior leaders and staff as well as the chair of the trust and other trust representatives.

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:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2024.

The school makes use of 13 alternative provisions, including 11 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Nora Ward

Lead inspector:
Ed Mather, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Ian Cooksey, Ofsted Inspector
Andy Johnson, Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Legg, Ofsted Inspector
Kevan John, 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 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,113
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

1,400
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)

52.71%
Well above 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

4.13%
Above 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

30.19%
Well 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

Well 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)

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)	21.0%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	25.4%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.3%	45.3%	Below

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)	33.6	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	33.0	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	32.6	46.3	Below

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)	-0.72	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.87	-0.03	Below

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)	17.9%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	17.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	18.2%	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)	29.2	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	26.7	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	25.7	35.0	Below

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)	-1.11	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.34	-0.57	Below

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)	17.9%	53.1%	-35.2 pp
2023/24 (final)	17.8%	53.1%	-35.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	18.2%	52.4%	-34.3 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)	29.2	50.4	-21.2
2023/24 (final)	26.7	50.0	-23.3
2022/23 (final)	25.7	50.3	-24.6

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)	-1.11	0.16	-1.27
2022/23 (final)	-1.34	0.17	-1.51

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)	86%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	87%	93%	Below

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)	25.60	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	25.51	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	16.40	34.16	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)	-0.4	0.0	Below
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)	13.0%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	16.8%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	16.5%	9.0%	Above

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)	34.0%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	45.2%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	45.6%	26.5%	Above

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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