

Fitzwaryn School

Address: Denchworth Road, Wantage, Oxfordshire, OX12 9ET

Unique reference number (URN): 139322

Inspection report: 7 July 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.

Inclusion**Exceptional** ●

The school has maintained very high standards of inclusion over time. This highly effective practice is at the core of the school's work. Leaders' unwavering commitment to inclusion transforms the experiences of every pupil. Regardless of their disability, additional need, vulnerability, background or individual circumstance, every pupil is empowered to thrive. Pupils are extremely well prepared for adult life.

Leaders identify any barriers that pupils face swiftly and communicate these very clearly to staff. Staff provide high-quality support, using closely tailored strategies, to overcome pupils' obstacles. Using a suite of well-considered, individualised approaches, staff respond expertly to pupils' needs. They monitor the impact of their actions precisely on pupils' progress. By implementing these approaches consistently, pupils' confidence, aspirations and outcomes increase markedly over time, allowing them to flourish.

Leaders' work with external agencies is impressive. The school is a key driver of inclusive practice within the locality, working collaboratively with schools and other professionals to build capacity, share expertise and improve pupils' outcomes. Leaders have established a deeply inclusive culture where pupils feel a strong sense of belonging and develop lasting friendships. Pupils make substantial progress, often experiencing success in education for the first time.

Personal development and wellbeing**Exceptional** ●

Leaders have developed a highly personalised and transformative approach to promoting pupils' personal development and wellbeing. The personal development programme is designed extremely carefully to build pupils' confidence, independence, communication skills and emotional wellbeing. As a result, pupils gain the knowledge, skills and self-belief that they need to engage positively with the wider world.

Leaders' ambitious and well-structured offer supports pupils' academic, personal and social development exceptionally well. The school's employability pathway provides valuable experiences that prepare pupils for future education, training and employment. Preparation for adulthood is woven through the curriculum and wider provision. This ensures that pupils' learning is relevant and meaningful, with frequent opportunities for them to develop the aspirations, skills and resilience that they need.

Pupils demonstrate a very strong understanding of personal, social, health and economic education. They develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships, including the importance of consent, mutual respect and personal boundaries. Pupils also have a secure awareness of online safety and know how to keep themselves safe when communicating and engaging in digital environments. This knowledge helps them to make informed choices and navigate the wider world with confidence.

Leaders and staff make certain that pupils' achievements are valued and celebrated. Opportunities to take on positions of responsibility, such as serving as mentors or school councillors, are meaningful and purposeful. These roles help pupils develop leadership skills

while deepening their understanding of democracy, individual responsibility and the rule of law. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their interests, talents and aspirations. Many take part in choir performance opportunities. All sixth-form students participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, developing their resilience, independence and problem-solving skills. Overall, the school's approach to personal development ensures that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

From a range of starting points, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make positive progress through the curriculum. They demonstrate passion and excitement when discussing their learning. Pupils develop their language, independence and social skills consistently well. The school's emphasis on developing communication enables pupils to build their skills and confidence progressively.

Leaders and staff monitor pupils' progress often to identify both strengths and any gaps in learning. They use this information effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements and identify needs early so they can provide pupils with targeted support. This approach ensures that pupils keep up with the curriculum.

The oldest pupils and sixth-form students achieve a range of qualifications that are matched carefully to their individual needs and aspirations. This ensures that they are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

The school prioritises high attendance for all pupils. For many, attendance improves significantly during their time at the school. Leaders maintain a rigorous oversight of attendance, carefully analysing data to identify patterns, trends and any emerging concerns. They act swiftly to address barriers to attendance through targeted and highly personalised support. Strong and trusting relationships with parents and carers underpin this work. This enables leaders to work collaboratively with families to secure sustained improvements in pupils' attendance and engagement with school life.

Leaders have established a highly positive culture that enables pupils to learn successfully in a calm, orderly and disruption-free environment. Pupils show high levels of respect for one another consistently. They are accepting of difference and demonstrate a strong understanding of the varied needs, strengths and challenges of their peers. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that staff deal with any concerns quickly and effectively. As a result, pupils understand the school's high expectations, behave well and contribute positively to a safe, inclusive and purposeful learning environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils. They have a detailed understanding of pupils' individual needs and use this knowledge to ensure that the curriculum and teaching are tailored carefully to support pupils' success. Leaders review and refine provision continually so that it remains highly effective for the school's changing pupil cohorts. Pupils who enter the school with gaps in their reading, writing and mathematical knowledge are identified promptly and receive highly effective support that enables them to catch up and achieve well.

Teachers draw on secure subject knowledge to help pupils build and strengthen their understanding over time. Frequent opportunities to revisit key knowledge and skills enable pupils to connect new and prior learning and deepen their understanding. This is particularly noteworthy in the school's employability curriculum, where pupils develop the skills they need for adulthood and life beyond school.

Leaders have a secure and accurate understanding of the effectiveness of teaching across the school. They reflect on practice continually and identify precisely where refinements can strengthen provision further. Through high-quality professional development, leaders support teachers to embed improvements consistently. This ensures that the already-high standard of teaching continues to develop and improve.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders' work is underpinned by a strong commitment to inclusion. Their improvement priorities are focused sharply on ensuring that the provision meets the complex and diverse needs of all pupils. Leaders monitor the school's provision systematically and use this information to make informed and deliberate decisions. They advocate passionately for pupils. Support is targeted carefully to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils achieve well and develop the knowledge, skills and confidence that they need for future success.

Those responsible for governance know the school very well. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities. They are extremely dedicated to the school. Their kindness, knowledge and expertise exemplify the school's ethos. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge. Trustees maintain robust oversight and ensure that all statutory responsibilities are met well. The trust makes a strong contribution to the school's success through effective support. This includes initiatives to manage staff workload, and a well-designed programme of collaborative professional development that strengthens staff expertise and practice.

Leaders have established highly effective partnerships with parents and carers, external agencies and other professionals. Parents are positive about the school's work and the support provided to their children. Leaders are recognised for their contribution to the local authority. They share their expertise with other schools to enhance practice in the sector.

Staff's wellbeing and workload are clear priorities for leaders. Staff value the help available to them and feel well supported, respected and appreciated for the contributions that they make to the school.

Leaders have ensured that the post-16 curriculum is constructed carefully and delivered consistently well. Programmes of study are planned skilfully to match the aspirations of students. Students progress well through the curriculum and achieve qualifications that are matched closely to their individual needs and interests. Alongside this, they develop the knowledge, skills and independence that they need for the future.

A highlight of the sixth form is its work experience and community programme. As part of this programme, students visit a range of settings. Staff work closely with placement providers to ensure that they understand students' individual needs and can provide the support necessary for students to succeed. Students speak positively about their work placements and how these prepare them for future employment as adults. Transitions into the workplace are planned carefully and tailored to individual aspirations, strengths and needs. This ensures that students know what to expect and are well prepared. A comprehensive careers programme further strengthens this provision, enabling students to develop the knowledge, skills and personal qualities that they need to make the right choices when they leave school.

During their time in the provision, students progress very successfully and achieve a broad range of qualifications to help them transition to appropriate education, employment or training.

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

Pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, feel welcome at this school and enjoy attending often. They are valued highly in the caring school community. Leaders actively seek, listen to and respond to pupils' views. They ensure that pupils play a meaningful role in shaping school life. Pupils trust staff to support them through challenges. Parents and carers share this confidence, recognising the positive difference that the school has made. For many pupils, the school has transformed their view of education by providing them with their first genuinely positive school experience.

Pupils enjoy learning and take pride in their achievements. They benefit from a rich and engaging curriculum that develops their knowledge, skills and understanding while broadening their experiences. Teaching enables pupils to develop the confidence and independence they need to succeed. Staff identify and remove barriers to learning effectively. As a result, pupils achieve well from their varied starting points. Pupils are ambitious for their futures. Leaders and staff are unwavering in their commitment to ensuring that every pupil feels valued and included in the school community.

Behaviour across the school is positive, calm and respectful. Pupils are supported so they can manage their own behaviour. Staff respond quickly to provide help for pupils who need it. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve bullying effectively. This contributes to pupils' strong sense of safety and wellbeing. During social times, pupils get along harmoniously. Any conflicts are dealt with swiftly. Pupils enjoy their time in school, and this is reflected in their high attendance.

Pupils take advantage of an extensive range of carefully considered wider experiences, including trips, visits and musical events. These opportunities ensure that pupils participate in a rich programme that broadens their experiences. Many complete their bronze and silver awards successfully through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme before leaving school.

Next steps

- Leaders should further refine the quality of teaching to continue to enhance the impact that this has on pupils' experiences of school.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Propeller Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Tom Pegler, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jane Edwards.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection took place on 7 and 8 July 2026.

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 and other senior leaders, the chair of trustees, the chair of the local governing body, the CEO and the director of education and safeguarding for the trust. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils during the inspection.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school caters for pupils with a variety of special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include specific learning difficulties, autism, physical disabilities, and profound and multiple learning difficulties.

The school makes use of one alternative provision that is unregistered.

Headteacher: Stephanie Coneboy

Lead inspector:

Martin Dyer, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

William James, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 7 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

125

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

108

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)

40.59%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 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 needs support at the school.

Location deprivation

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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, VI - Visual Impairment, OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, HI - Hearing Impairment, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, MSI - Multi-Sensory Impairment, PD - Physical Disability, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty, SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty, PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty

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
2023 leavers (revised)	100%
2022 leavers (revised)	100%
2021 leavers (revised)	100%

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 (3 term)	9.3%
2023/24 (3 term)	10.1%
2022/23 (3 term)	8.1%

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school
2024/25 (3 term)	23.5%
2023/24 (3 term)	30.5%
2022/23 (3 term)	21.9%

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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