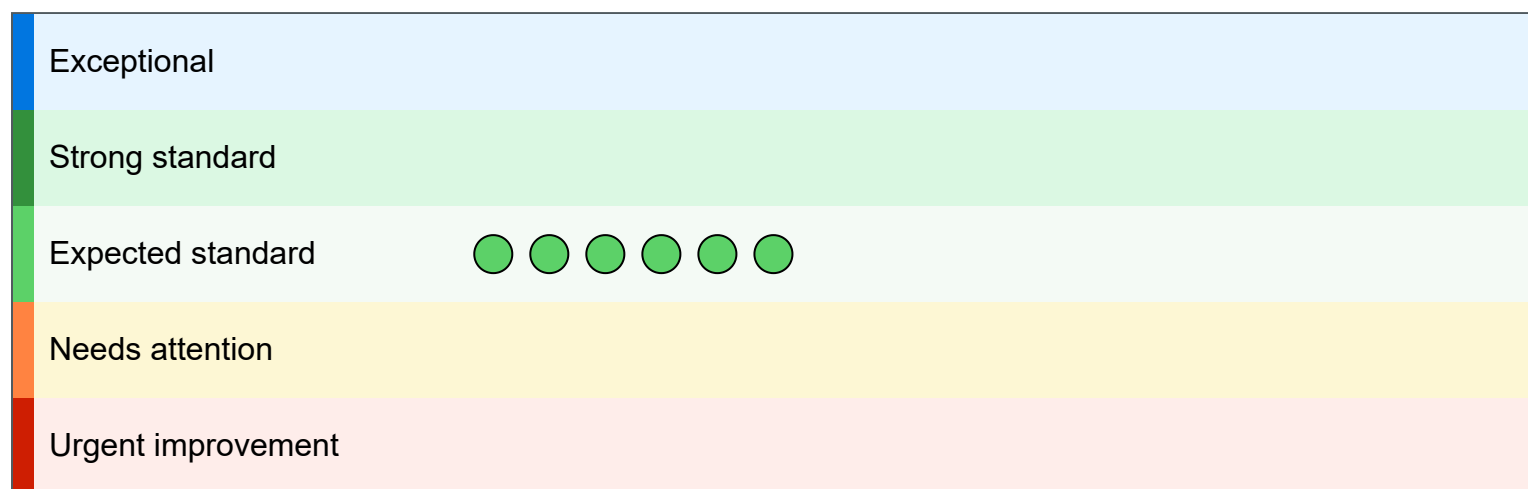


The Wells Academy

Address: Ransom Drive, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG3 5LR

Unique reference number (URN): 147456

Inspection report: 13 January 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Overall, pupils achieve well from their starting points in both key stages. They learn the curriculum well and, by the end of Year 11, are well prepared to take positive next steps in education, employment or training.

Leaders' effective action over recent years has ensured that pupils develop the important knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics they require to study the rest of the curriculum successfully.

Published results for national examinations show varied levels of success. This partly reflects the school serving a substantial number of pupils who arrive in Years 10 and 11 with turbulent experiences of education. Work in books and lessons shows that the school is effectively closing gaps that exist in these pupils' knowledge and understanding. The most recent set of examination results shows that pupils overall, including disadvantaged pupils, attain results roughly in line with national averages. Pupils who start at the school in Year 7 typically achieve well.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders' promotion of the importance of school attendance is making a positive difference. This is because leaders systematically identify and remove any barriers that prevent pupils from attending school. The proportion of pupils who miss large amounts of school, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), was above the national average. This has reduced substantially as a result of leaders' actions. Overall, pupils, including those with SEND, now maintain regular attendance. A point of celebration is the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which was above the national average in 2024.

Leaders ensure that staff and pupils understand and consistently follow the established school routines. Pupils appreciate the school's orderly environment. Older pupils say, and school records show, that behaviour has improved markedly during their time at the school. While suspensions have been high in comparison with national averages, these have declined substantially. Leaders put effective support in place for pupils who find it hard to manage their emotions and behaviour. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rarely repeated. Pupils typically behave well and demonstrate the school's values. They respect each other's differences and get along. Lessons are typically focused and free from disruptive behaviour. Pupils generally work hard, support each other in lessons and celebrate success.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders' ambition for pupils' learning is demonstrated within the school's 'Fundamental Ideas' curriculum. Leaders have organised the curriculum well so that pupils build knowledge over time. Pupils have lots of opportunities to revisit previously taught material. This helps them remember key knowledge in the long term.

After a sustained programme of training, the school now has teachers with the specialist subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum effectively. Staff are also well trained in the school's research-informed approaches to teaching. They use these approaches well so that pupils typically receive high-quality teaching. Staff routinely check what pupils know and can do. When necessary, staff provide support that prevents pupils from falling behind their peers.

Typically, using the school's guidance and training, staff help pupils overcome whatever barriers to learning they face. Pupils at an early stage of reading benefit from well-established small-group support sessions. These enable pupils to strengthen their reading knowledge. At times, teachers' support in lessons does not precisely target pupils' exact needs. When this happens, these pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they could.

Leaders carefully monitor the quality of the curriculum and make any necessary improvements.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school aims to improve life chances for all pupils, regardless of background or needs. Leaders continually look for ways to make inclusion even better. They swiftly identify pupils' specific needs. Leaders work with external specialists, parents, carers and pupils to develop effective support plans. The school has a well-trained inclusion team. This team's holistic approach ensures that pupils are supported well academically, emotionally and socially. Leaders also help families support their children's education at home.

Leaders provide staff with the guidance and training they need to adapt learning activities to meet pupils' needs. Teachers use this information well. They design learning activities that generally support pupils as needed. Similarly, leaders arrange effective small-group support sessions that help pupils overcome specific challenges they face. Leaders' use of alternative provision is well considered. This ensures that pupils who access this provision receive the bespoke help they need to be successful in education and adult life.

The support for disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care ensures that these pupils do as well as their peers. In partnership with the local authority, leaders provide effective support for children in care.

Leaders check the impact of support in place. They typically catch when provision is not working well and make changes when necessary.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Over recent years, trustees have ensured that the school's new leadership team has galvanised to make substantial improvements at the school. Trustees and school leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This comes from effective systems of quality assurance within the school and the trust. Using this information, trustees and school leaders work with moral purpose and determination to ensure the school improves pupils' life chances, regardless of any challenging circumstances in their lives.

Leaders have put a research-informed professional learning programme in place. This is fundamental to the school's improvements. Staff are supported to learn new approaches to their work and are given the time to put what they learn into sustained practice. Staff are highly positive about this aspect of their work. This has contributed to the school's high staff morale and rates of staff retention. Similarly, teachers at the early stage of their careers are well prepared to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Trustees and leaders have won the confidence of parents and carers. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Trustees successfully steer the strategic direction of the school. They have in place effective support and challenge for the school that has led to substantial improvements over recent years. They meet all statutory duties, including ensuring that safeguarding practices and procedures are robust.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders are rightly proud of the way the school provides for pupils' personal development. At the heart of the curriculum is the aim for pupils to celebrate the diversity within the school community and the world beyond their own experiences. They learn about a range of faiths, cultures and religions. Pupils develop a mature understanding of fundamental British values and the rights and responsibilities associated with treating people equally. They are well prepared for life in modern society.

The school has in place a well-considered personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. This includes well-taught, distinct sessions, days focused on PSHE and a series of engaging assemblies. Leaders have designed an appropriate curriculum for pupils to learn about sex and healthy relationships. Leaders also ensure that pupils understand how to assess risk and stay safe at school, home, in the community and when online.

Staff encourage pupils to aspire to the highest levels of success in their careers. The school's careers provision supports pupils well in exploring future options. The work-related learning opportunities and links with employers, colleges and universities help pupils learn about the many different options available in employment, education or training.

Pupils have access to a wide variety of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. A high proportion of disadvantaged pupils enjoy these opportunities. In partnership with external organisations, leaders have built an array of interesting enrichment activities at the school. For example, pupils benefit from listening to visiting professors from internationally recognised universities and partnerships with basketball associations. The enrichment offer, though a positive feature of the school, is an area that leaders continue to improve. This includes working with pupils to increase the opportunities available to them to learn beyond the classroom, such as educational visits.

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

Pupils value the warm and welcoming environment at school. They appreciate how staff greet them every morning at the school gates and throughout the day in corridors and lessons. Leaders and staff have created an inclusive culture. Pupils, regardless of their diverse backgrounds and learning needs, feel a sense of community at the school. Leaders ensure that pupils have access to high-quality pastoral support. This ensures that the many pupils who join the school after Year 7, including those from overseas, quickly build friendships and integrate within the school.

Pupils understand and live up to leaders' high expectations of their behaviour within what the school refers to as its 'warm strict' culture. Pupils demonstrate the learning habits that the school expects. Staff quickly and effectively correct pupils if they misbehave. When this happens, misbehaviour stops. Pupils feel safe and valued. They know that if they have any worries they can secure effective support through the school's 'I want to talk...' and similar support schemes. The school ensures that any concerns about bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils attend regularly because they value their school and know that education is important.

Pupils generally achieve well. They work with determination and take pride when they achieve the school's ambitious goals. Leaders swiftly ensure that the many pupils who join the school with turbulent experiences in education catch up on any missed learning. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically learn the curriculum well and make appropriate progress. As a result of improvements made to teaching, pupils' performance in public examinations improved in 2025.

Pupils benefit from the many extra-curricular activities available to them. These activities support pupils to develop their interests across the curriculum.

Next steps

- Leaders and trustees should ensure that adaptations in teaching are sufficiently precise to ensure that pupils who need support with foundational knowledge, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well from their starting points across the curriculum.

About this inspection

This school is part of Greenwood 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 (CEO), Wayne Norrie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christine Hall.

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 chair of the board of trustees, the CEO, trust leaders, the principal, members of the school's senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils 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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 12 alternative provisions, including 5 that are unregistered.

Principal: George Coles

Lead inspector:

Al Mistrano, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Richard Vasey, Ofsted Inspector

Julie Sheppard, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Sadler, 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 13 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

704

Below 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

800

Below 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: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

50.85%

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

1.70%

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

11.36%

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

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 (provisional)	34.7%	45.2%	Below
2023/24 (final)	25.8%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.8%	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 (provisional)	43.1	45.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	34.2	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	38.5	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)	-0.95	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.64	-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 (provisional)	25.4%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	18.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	21.9%	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 (provisional)	40.5	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	28.8	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	32.8	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)	-1.20	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.95	-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 (provisional)	25.4%	52.8%	-27.5 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	18.7%	53.1%	-34.5 pp
2022/23 (final)	21.9%	52.4%	-30.6 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 (provisional)	40.5	50.3	-9.8
2023/24 (final)	28.8	50.0	-21.2
2022/23 (final)	32.8	50.3	-17.5

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)	-1.20	0.16	-1.36
2022/23 (final)	-0.95	0.17	-1.11

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)	85%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	86%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	84%	94%	Below

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)	7.9%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.3%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.9%	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)	26.3%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	34.4%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	32.6%	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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