

Carterton Community College

Address: Upavon Way, Carterton, Oxfordshire, OX18 1BU

Unique reference number (URN): 123236

Inspection report: 14 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.

This school requires significant improvement

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **significant improvement** because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Needs attention

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders communicate key information about pupils to all staff and ensure that relevant training is in place to help staff to support pupils well. However, this does not translate into consistently effective support for pupils in lessons. Pupils do not get the help they need to achieve what they should. Leaders know the issues and address them, but the impact of their actions is at a relatively early stage.

Leaders make sure that the needs of individual pupils are identified accurately. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is mapped out clearly. Leaders review this appropriately, making any adjustments when necessary. This approach extends to all pupils who have additional needs or challenges, including those known to social care.

Leaders make constructive use of additional funding to enhance pupils' experiences at school. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have one or more parent or carer in the Armed Forces. Leaders' strategy supports these pupils to play a full part in school life. While pupils' pastoral needs are met well, leaders' monitoring identifies accurately that these pupils do not, overall, achieve enough. Arrangements to support children in care are effective. Pupils who attend alternative provision for part of their time do so for appropriate reasons.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders have not brought about enough improvement since the last inspection in key areas like curriculum, teaching and achievement. Governors have not challenged the school or held it to account robustly enough to ensure that necessary improvements have been made.

Leaders currently understand the school's context well. They have an accurate view of the important priorities that need to be tackled in the school. Since September, leaders have started to take the right actions across a range of vital areas. Vulnerable pupils with additional needs are at the centre of leaders' work. Middle leaders' accountability has increased further, and they are involved more prominently in making improvements.

Acting in the best interests of pupils, leaders have raised expectations of behaviour, leading to improvements. New approaches to tackling weaker teaching and curriculum design are beginning to yield positive change. These are directly linked to the programme of training for staff, both in general and for individuals. Teachers new to their career are supported well.

Governors now have a clear and accurate understanding of the school. This has led them to reorganise governance in order to hold the school to account more robustly. Governors fulfil their statutory duties. Leaders and governors rightly recognise that leaders now need to focus their work on addressing the priorities which will have the highest impact on pupils' outcomes, experiences and attendance.

Leaders take staff workload and wellbeing into account in specific and effective ways. Staff feel valued and listened to by leaders. The majority of parents are very positive and supportive of the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention 

While pupils are positive about this element of the school's work, they do not develop a consistently secure understanding of key topics and values. Most pupils know about how to keep themselves safe, including online, and what contributes to creating and sustaining healthy, consensual relationships. Their knowledge of other areas of personal development and wellbeing is more variable. They lack secure understanding of fundamental British values, such as tolerance and democracy. Pupils lack knowledge in aspects such as cultural differences and spirituality. Some pupils understand the school's values really well and see how these have an impact on them and their lives at school, yet others do not. Sixth-form students tend to develop a deeper understanding than pupils in the rest of the school because provision is more consistent in Years 12 and 13.

The programme for careers information, education, advice and guidance is more secure in the sixth form than in key stages 3 and 4. Not all pupils in Years 8 to 11 experience a structured and comprehensive careers programme. For example, pupils do not get a full range of opportunities to engage with providers of technical education or apprenticeships. This is especially lower down the school. The school works effectively, however, to arrange bespoke guidance and support for individual pupils, especially more vulnerable pupils. Overall, pupils' experiences of careers education in key stages 3 and 4 are inconsistent.

Pupils value the range of trips, clubs and activities that they are able to participate in. Disadvantaged pupils and those from service families have full access to high-quality additional opportunities which support their sense of belonging. Pupils recognise the high priority the school places on supporting them pastorally and they value this greatly. For example, there is specific provision in place to help pupils with their mental health, and positive counselling support is available when pupils need it. Most pupils are confident that they know who to go to if they have any worries.

Post 16 provision

Needs attention 

Students' attendance has improved markedly over the last year because of the school's effective work in this area. This supports students to make better progress through the curriculum than has been the case previously. Examination results have been low over time, but current students' achievement is better. This is because leaders have taken the right action over the last year to secure more effective teaching in the sixth form, based on their accurate understanding of provision.

Leaders and staff identify students who are at risk of underachieving and provide appropriate additional support. Teachers make effective adaptations to learning in order to meet the needs of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged students. Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are rising. These improvements are not, however, currently reflected in students' outcomes at the end of Year 13.

Students benefit from a well-designed personal development programme, including additional opportunities beyond the curriculum. As a result, they develop a mature outlook and secure the knowledge that they need to support them in their future lives. The school provides effective information, advice and guidance to help students to go on to positive destinations when they leave school. Over half of students progress to study at university, for example.

Urgent improvement ●

Achievement

Urgent improvement ●

Examination results at the end of key stage 4 and in the sixth form are low, with no signs of improvement in recent years. Pupils are not as well prepared as they need to be, therefore, for their next steps when they leave school. Currently, pupils' work in too many subjects fails to demonstrate that they have secured the essential knowledge, though outcomes are more positive in the sixth form. While pupils achieve much more when there is better teaching and higher expectations, this is very much the exception.

Weaknesses in pupils' knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing are not tackled effectively enough. This hampers pupils' achievement across the curriculum. In general, pupils' verbal and written responses lack depth and do not demonstrate that they have learned knowledge securely. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make enough progress from their starting points. Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are not closing quickly enough.

Attendance and behaviour

Urgent improvement ●

Pupils' rates of attendance are too low and have been so over recent years. There are wide variabilities between different year groups, with older pupils in key stage 4 attending less regularly than younger pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities miss more school than others. Rates of persistent absence remain high. Leaders have begun to tackle these complex issues this academic year. There are some very early signs of improvements for individual pupils. Nonetheless, overall attendance rates are not rising rapidly enough. Leaders' analysis of attendance is not yet fully effective in helping them pinpoint the root causes of pupils' absence. However, leaders have raised students' attendance in the sixth form much more quickly.

Pupils rightly recognise that behaviour has improved since September 2025 because leaders have set higher expectations. Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying have reduced and any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively. In general, lessons are not disturbed by

low-level disruption. However, there are times when pupils do not engage in their learning well enough and go off task. Teachers do not always follow the school's agreed approach to tackle this. Also, some pupils are still outside of lessons when they should not be.

Curriculum and teaching

Urgent improvement 

The curriculum does not meet pupils' needs because it is not designed to address important gaps in their knowledge, including in mathematics and writing. Support for weaker readers is not effective, although leaders have very recently introduced provision to address this. While the curriculum in most subjects is sequenced and organised to build pupils' knowledge over time, in some subjects it is not. Leaders have an accurate understanding of teaching and the curriculum. They know the relative strengths but are clear about the significant weaknesses that exist. Leaders rightly have plans in place to revise the curriculum, but these have yet to come to any meaningful fruition. Leaders' work in this area is further forward in the sixth form.

Teachers, on the whole, have secure subject knowledge. However, this is not the case in all subjects. Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are low overall, which means that pupils do not achieve what they should. Too often, pupils who have additional needs do not receive the right support, for example those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not effective enough. Pupils are often unclear about how they can improve their work. Leaders' renewed, higher expectations for teaching are not realised in practice consistently enough.

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

The school welcomes pupils with a wide range of needs and backgrounds. This includes pupils who are refugees, those from service families and a relatively high proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff successfully support pupils socially and emotionally, something which both pupils and the majority of parents and carers understandably value. One parent, reflecting the views of many, commented, 'The school's pastoral support has been amazing for my children. The school is always on hand to listen to my concerns and offer support.'

Relationships between pupils and staff are generally positive and constructive. Pupils typically act with care, consideration and respect towards each other and towards staff. Many pupils enjoy school and feel safe. If there is any bullying or other issues, the majority of pupils are confident to raise their concerns with staff. Pupils know that these will be dealt with quickly.

These positive dimensions to the school do not currently extend to pupils' learning. Too often, expectations of what pupils will achieve are low. Pupils with additional barriers, such as those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, do not make enough progress through the curriculum. This is because often they do not receive the right support in lessons. Pupils' examination results are, overall, significantly below national averages. Some pupils become disengaged with school and learning. Too many pupils do not attend regularly enough.

Pupils learn about key aspects of life in modern Britain to support them in the future. They have secure knowledge about how to keep themselves safe and the characteristics of positive and healthy relationships. Pupils' understanding is inconsistent in other areas, however. While they are supported to move on to positive next steps after leaving school, especially beyond Year 13, the advice and guidance that the school provides is not fully effective.

Next steps

- Leaders must ensure that teaching and the curriculum meet pupils' needs fully and consistently, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, and so raise pupils' achievement rapidly, including in examinations at the end of key stages 4 and 5.
 - Leaders must address gaps in pupils' knowledge and basic skills in numeracy, reading and writing effectively to support their learning across the curriculum.
 - Leaders must raise pupils' rates of attendance, especially pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, and strengthen pupils' engagement with school and with their learning.
 - Leaders should sharpen their actions to improve the school further so that they focus on the most important priorities first, ensuring that leaders and governors evaluate progress robustly so that improvements are made at the right pace and are sustained.
 - Leaders should improve the design and delivery of the personal development programme, including careers education, so that pupils develop secure knowledge of all aspects and get the full range of advice and guidance that they need.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Ian Courtney.

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.

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, a wide range of staff and pupils, governors and representatives of the local authority.

The school does not fully meet 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.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing

significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up his post at the school in September 2025. A number of other leaders are relatively new to their roles.

The school makes use of 9 alternative provisions, including 5 that are unregistered.

The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities at the school is relatively high, as is the proportion of pupils from service families.

Headteacher: Matthew Maudsley

Lead inspector:

Matthew Haynes, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Richard Kearsey, Ofsted Inspector

Elizabeth Jeanes, Ofsted Inspector

Julia Mortimore, 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 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

743

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

909

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

21.62%

Close to 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

3.36%

Close to 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

25.03%

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

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).

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)	18.9%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	21.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	25.2%	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)	33.8	46.0	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	35.8	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	36.2	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)	-0.61	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.60	-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)	4.5%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	4.8%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	10.5%	25.2%	Below

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)	28.9	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	21.7	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	24.5	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)	-1.37	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.27	-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)	4.5%	53.1%	-48.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	4.8%	53.1%	-48.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	10.5%	52.4%	-41.9 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)	28.9	50.4	-21.5
2023/24 (final)	21.7	50.0	-28.3
2022/23 (final)	24.5	50.3	-25.8

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)	-1.37	0.16	-1.54
2022/23 (final)	-1.27	0.17	-1.43

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)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	84%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	97%	94%	Average

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)	14.63	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	18.25	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	21.62	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)	-0.7	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.6	0.0	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)	9.4%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	9.2%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	10.2%	9.0%	Close to average

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)	20.9%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	23.1%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	26.7%	26.5%	Close to average

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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