

# Walsall Academy

**Address:** Lichfield Road, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands, WS3 3LX

**Unique reference number (URN):** 133697

## Inspection report: 17 March 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.

## Strong standard ●

### Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders' work to be inclusive is effective. This is due to their taking considerable care to accurately identify pupils' individual needs. This is for pupils who might face barriers to their learning or participation in school life. The support that leaders put in place for these pupils is systematically applied. This is because they place a high emphasis on ensuring that staff understand individual pupils. Leaders train staff successfully to put in place the agreed strategies to support pupils' needs.

Leaders carefully monitor how well pupils are doing. This includes their learning, attendance, wellbeing and participation in the significant wider offer the school has in place. There is regular review and adjustment of the strategies that are in place for each pupil. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities each have a champion who ensures their needs are consistently met. Leaders carefully consider and review the use of any alternative provision. The school uses high-quality research to inform and adapt its pupil premium strategy. This means it is effective in supporting disadvantaged pupils to achieve well and to participate fully in school life.

This coordinated work means that the school realises its vision that 'everybody is a somebody'.

### Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders at all levels have made significant improvements at Walsall Academy. This is because they have a clear understanding of the school. They have prioritised and embedded the right actions for improvement in the right order, always considering what is best for the pupils. These improvements have significantly enhanced the offer. For example, they have positively developed teaching and the curriculum leading to improved achievement. Leaders have embedded a culture of high expectations, including for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils. Leaders make sure a pupil's background does not determine their life chances.

Governors and trustees have a deep knowledge of the school. They have unswerving ambition that pupils achieve increasingly well. As part of the trust, those responsible for governance have astutely supported the school on its improvement journey with resources and expertise. They provide helpful support and challenge to school leaders.

The school willingly engages with a range of external agencies and sources of support. This ensures that the provision in place continues to develop. Staff at all levels appreciate how they are part of this journey and how they are supported to develop through a highly effective professional learning programme. Staff wellbeing and workload are routinely considered by school leaders and also those responsible for governance.

Leaders' work for pupils' personal development and wellbeing is successful. This is because leaders have carefully considered the key knowledge that pupils need to thrive. This programme is constructed around the themes of relationships, health, wider world and growing up. The programme is very well delivered. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on their learning. They build secure and detailed knowledge. For example, they develop tolerance and a rich awareness of their beliefs and those of other people. Pupils have a deep understanding of healthy relationships. They value the diversity of life in modern Britain. The school provides extensive support for pupils' wellbeing. Pupils appreciate this support and the way in which they learn to care for themselves.

Leaders' work around the development of pupils' character is highly effective. This is embedded across the school through mentoring schemes and student-led family conferences, for example. This enables pupils to reflect deeply on their development as individuals.

The school's wider offer for pupils' personal development is extensive. For example, in after-school slots called 'session 3', there is a wide range of clubs and opportunities. Leaders track attendance at these. They proactively support pupils to try new experiences. Leaders adapt the programme for pupils' needs. There are an extensive number of trips. These include a significant number with a successful focus on outdoor education. Experiences have a meaningful impact. The school places considerable emphasis on ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils participate.

Careers education and guidance is high quality. From early in their school journey, pupils learn about different options. These include apprenticeships, further education and employment. Pupils speak highly of the extensive opportunities shared at the careers fair, which the school organises.

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## **Expected standard**

### **Achievement**

### **Expected standard**

Results in pupils' national assessments have improved. They are now generally in line with national averages. This is due to improvements to the curriculum and a more consistent quality of teaching. The improved achievement includes pupils who have barriers to their learning, such as pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There remains some variability, however. Leaders recognise there is further work to improve outcomes in English and mathematics, for example. At post-16, there are improving results for A-level students. For example, students who took their A levels in 2025 had consistently good results. Those who study T levels achieve well.

Pupils typically take pride in their work. They apply previous knowledge to new learning. Pupils who need support with key knowledge, such as reading, get this promptly. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps, whether in education, employment or training.

## Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have worked relentlessly on improving pupils' attendance. This has had steady but significant impact, as pupils now attend well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils who are disadvantaged. The numbers of pupils who are often absent has also reduced. This is thanks to the school's strategic approach. Leaders ensure that there is regular contact with parents and carers of absent pupils. Barriers to attendance are rapidly identified and reduced. There are also incentives for pupils to continue to improve their attendance. These actions sit alongside other improvements at Walsall Academy. Taken as whole, these result in pupils wanting to attend school more regularly.

Leaders have established high expectations for pupils' conduct. Pupils typically respect these and aspire to live up to them. Staff apply leaders' expectations well. Pupils who might find it more challenging to behave appropriately have thoughtful support. This enables them to reflect on their choices. Typically, this is effective. There is a calm, orderly and respectful culture. Inconsiderate behaviour or bullying are not tolerated.

## Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have reviewed the curriculum. This ensures that it clearly identifies the key knowledge that pupils need and the order in which they should learn it. Leaders adjusted the delivery to better support pupils' learning. For example, they have given more time to subjects at key stage 3. This work is now embedded. Pupils learn a broad and ambitious curriculum.

Leaders have clarified how they want staff to deliver the curriculum. For instance, teaching is based on four 'key pillars'. Targeted training for teachers ensures that pupils learn the school's curriculum well. Learning tasks are typically selected to build on what pupils already know. There remain some inconsistencies, however. These are mainly around how precisely teachers check pupils' knowledge and then adjust the learning task. Teachers adapt learning well for pupils who might have barriers to their learning, for example pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are some pupils who arrive at Walsall Academy without the foundations they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Typically, gaps in key knowledge are identified and closed. For example, the school supports effectively weaker readers to develop the fluency they need to embark on learning the curriculum.

## Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

The sixth-form provision is a source of pride for the school. Leaders have developed a wide number of pathways for students, for example combining academic and vocational options. Students are well advised about the best selection of courses.

Over time, students achieve well with results broadly in line with national averages. This includes students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Achievement is positive because the school teaches its sixth-

form students the key knowledge they need. In some courses, students achieve increasingly well. For example, the A-level results last year showed very positive progress from starting points. The school is rightly proud of how well the students achieved in their T levels.

Leaders advise students well on potential destinations after school. For instance, impressive numbers access highly competitive university courses. Students enjoy and benefit from a significant range of wider opportunities. These include student leadership roles and specialist societies to support, for example, applications to study medicine. These opportunities help students to develop confidence, resilience and leadership skills.

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

Walsall Academy prides itself that 'everybody is a somebody'. Pupils are known as individuals. The school takes considerable care in this. Barriers to learning or wellbeing are systematically identified and reduced. Pupils are happy, and enjoy coming to school to learn. In addition, leaders have embedded significant improvements to the curriculum and how it is taught. This means pupils learn well and achieve well in external examinations at the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form.

Pupils are actively involved in the wider life of the school. This is especially the case for the many opportunities pupils have for their personal development. This includes a very extensive range of clubs, activities and trips. Some of these have a lasting impact for the pupils involved. The school's work in this area also includes extensive provision for the development of pupils' character. There is thoughtful support for their wellbeing. Pupils engage with this offer really well. This includes vulnerable pupils. Pupils' views and experiences are routinely checked, such as their wellbeing, through regular surveys. Pupils appreciate these many opportunities and take advantage of them.

Pupils enjoy school. This helps them attend well. Pupils behave very well both in social times and in lessons. They understand that it is important to try their best. Bullying is not tolerated. The school ensures that pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. This is also thanks to the significant provision for pupils to engage with student-led family conferences, culture days, mentoring programmes, and the wide-ranging careers programme.

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## **Next steps**

- Leaders should continue to develop the quality of teaching, including the consistency of checking for pupils' understanding.
  - Leaders should continue their work to improve pupils' achievement, with a particular focus on English and mathematics.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the executive adviser Fiona Seddon, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Bowater.

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 HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, as well as trustees, governors, senior leaders, trust employees, staff and pupils.

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 uses 6 alternative provisions. 2 are registered and 4 are unregistered.

The headteacher took up his post in 2023. A number of other senior leaders have recently taken up their posts.

Headteacher: Simon Topper

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### Lead inspector:

Andrew Madden, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Martin Spoor, Ofsted Inspector

Thomas Walton, Ofsted Inspector

Natasha Lloyd, Ofsted Inspector

Ed Leighton, Ofsted Inspector

Gail Peyton, 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 17 March 2026

# School and pupil context

## Total pupils

**1,418**

Above 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

**1,350**

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)

**40.86%**

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

**3.03%**

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**

**12.62%**

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**

**Close to 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) | 37.7%       | 45.4%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)   | 34.6%       | 45.9%            | Below                          |

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2022/23 (final) | 26.9%       | 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) | 43.9        | 46.0             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)   | 43.7        | 45.9             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)   | 40.4        | 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) | -0.09       | -0.03            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final) | -0.43       | -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) | 22.7%       | 25.8%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)   | 23.5%       | 25.8%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)   | 22.8%       | 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) | 36.5        | 34.9             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)   | 37.9        | 34.6             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)   | 35.2        | 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) | -0.28       | -0.57            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final) | -0.65       | -0.57            | Close to average               |

### 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) | 22.7%       | 53.1%                            | -30.5 pp                |
| 2023/24 (final)   | 23.5%       | 53.1%                            | -29.6 pp                |
| 2022/23 (final)   | 22.8%       | 52.4%                            | -29.6 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 (revised) | 36.5        | 50.4                             | -13.9                   |
| 2023/24 (final)   | 37.9        | 50.0                             | -12.1                   |
| 2022/23 (final)   | 35.2        | 50.3                             | -15.1                   |

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) | -0.28       | 0.16                             | -0.45                   |
| 2022/23 (final) | -0.65       | 0.17                             | -0.81                   |

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) | 91%         | 91%              | Average                        |
| 2022 leavers (revised)     | 93%         | 93%              | Average                        |
| 2021 leavers (revised)     | 92%         | 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) | 32.40       | 34.99            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)   | 32.99       | 34.38            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)   | 31.96       | 34.16            | Close to average               |

### 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) | 0.3         | 0.0              | Above                          |
| 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) | 8.8%        | 8.1%             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 10.0%       | 8.9%             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 11.0%       | 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) | 22.6%       | 21.9%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 27.7%       | 25.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 29.8%       | 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.

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