

King Alfred's

Address: Portway, Wantage, Oxfordshire, OX12 9BY

Unique reference number (URN): 137140

Inspection report: 21 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.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders accurately and swiftly identify any barriers to learning and/or wellbeing that pupils may have. Leaders provide professional learning opportunities for staff to develop their expertise in meeting pupils' needs. Typically, the support that is planned for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well matched to their needs and generally helps them to access learning effectively. Leaders review and adapt support appropriately where needed.

Leaders use a wide range of approaches to support disadvantaged pupils. Some of this work is having a positive impact. For example, reading support and bespoke tutoring have helped disadvantaged pupils to close gaps in their learning. However, leaders recognise where their use of additional funding for these pupils has not had sufficient impact to improve their engagement and achievement. Leaders regularly review the impact of this work and shape future provision accordingly.

Leaders provide effective support for pupils who are known, or have previously been known, to social care. Leaders know these pupils well and understand their needs. They work effectively in partnership with relevant professionals to ensure that support is regularly reviewed and refined.

Alternative provision is used appropriately and only where it will help to meet pupils' individual needs.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard

Leaders have put in place a well-considered sixth-form offer that reflects the local context and the needs of students. The curriculum is ambitious and enables students to develop their knowledge and independent learning skills over time. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They help students to deepen their learning through effective teaching. Typically, teachers check students' understanding well, so they can address any knowledge gaps or misconceptions. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively. Across the sixth form, students achieve well in national examinations, in line with the national average. Students with SEND and those who are disadvantaged make progress from their starting points. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Students have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well, consistently modelling respectful relationships with staff and their peers. They benefit from wider opportunities beyond the curriculum that help them to be prepared for their next steps. Students value the broad enrichment offer and the leadership positions that help to develop their confidence and life skills. Students access independent careers advice that strengthens their understanding of different future pathways and how to access them.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Achievement is inconsistent for different pupil groups and subject areas. Often, pupils do not develop their writing accuracy and fluency as securely as they could. Sometimes, pupils who have gaps in their knowledge are not sufficiently well supported to close these gaps. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should in national examinations. As a result, they are often not as well prepared for their next steps as they need to be.

Typically, pupils have appropriate mathematical knowledge and reading skills to support their readiness for the next stage of their learning. In subjects where the curriculum is more securely embedded, pupils achieve well. They build their knowledge confidently as they move through the school. On the whole, achievement is close to average in national examinations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make broadly appropriate progress from their starting points.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Attendance is not as high as it needs to be. In particular, many disadvantaged pupils miss school too often. Leaders are beginning to take appropriate steps to improve pupils' attendance. They understand the barriers that some pupils face and are starting to reduce these. However, it is too early to see the sustained impact of this work.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged are sometimes not as well supported as they could be to improve their behaviour. Staff understand the difficulties some pupils face in managing their behaviour. Often, they provide effective support to overcome these. However, pupils with additional needs continue to be suspended with far greater frequency than their peers. More widely, leaders have taken effective action to significantly reduce the incidence of poor behaviour and, in turn, the use of suspensions. Leaders have high expectations for how pupils should behave. Pupils understand the importance of rules and routines. Staff regularly reinforce expectations. This results in a broadly calm learning environment. Typically, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Social times are generally orderly and harmonious. Leaders manage any incidents of bullying or discrimination appropriately, such that these behaviours are uncommon.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

In some subjects, the curriculum is not as ambitious or coherent as it needs to be. Where this is the case, learning does not happen in an appropriate sequence that helps pupils to build knowledge over time. Leaders recognise where further work is needed to improve the curriculum. They are starting to take appropriate steps to address this and recognise writing as a priority.

Across the school, there is variability in how effectively teachers' checks on learning are used to identify misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils are often unclear about how or when to improve their work. There is inconsistency in how effectively

the curriculum is adapted to meet pupils' needs. Sometimes, the support that staff provide for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged does not support them to access learning as independently as their peers.

Leaders have introduced more consistent approaches and routines in the classroom. Pupils respond positively to these and typically participate well in learning. Teachers know their subjects well. Generally, they explain new content clearly.

Pupils are well supported to develop secure foundations in reading and mathematics. Staff provide helpful and timely support to pupils who have gaps in their reading skills to ensure they catch up quickly.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders' actions have not yet had sufficient impact in some areas of the school's work. As a result, the quality and consistency of pupils' learning experiences vary. Leaders are broadly accurate in their understanding of the school's strengths and where they need to focus their attention for further improvement. Leaders carry out regular 'culture checks' to identify how well pupils are behaving and how effectively they are learning. Through these, leaders are rightly assured that the learning environment is more consistently calm and purposeful. However, leaders' understanding of how securely pupils are learning and achieving is sometimes less precise.

Governors understand and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They are supportive of the school and considerate of staff wellbeing. Governors have clear processes in place for checking how effectively leaders are addressing strategic priorities. They hold leaders to account and challenge them on the impact of their work. Sometimes, governors are not as ambitious as they could be about the timeliness and extent of improvements.

Staff are positive about their work. They feel valued and benefit from the range of professional learning opportunities available to them. Teachers at the earliest stages of their career are well supported and make a positive start to the profession. Leaders are considerate of workload, minimising additional burdens on staff wherever possible.

Leaders act in pupils' best interests. They seek external advice and specialist support where appropriate in order to meet pupils' needs. Typically, leaders forge positive working partnerships with parents, carers and the wider community.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention 

Leaders do not have consistently clear oversight of the impact of the personal development programme. Pupils are not as knowledgeable as they need to be about some aspects of relationships education. For example, some pupils have insufficient opportunities to explore important themes around misogyny, gender respect and sexual harassment. Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, is not consistently clear. Often, pupils have limited knowledge about the legal framework around equality and discrimination.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum covers all aspects of relationships and sex education and health education. They provide opportunities for pupils to revisit learning through assemblies and tutor time. In some areas, pupils learn well. For example, they understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils demonstrate clear awareness of online safety and the risks they should be alert to. Leaders adapt the curriculum where needed if they become aware of emerging risks in the school or wider community. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively with adapted approaches that support their understanding around health and personal safety.

The careers education, information and guidance leaders provide is helpful. Staff ensure that pupils access independent advice alongside their wider learning about next steps and future pathways. Pupils benefit from a range of practical learning experiences that support their understanding about the world of work and further education.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of enrichment activities, including clubs, trips, competitions and performances. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to benefit from this wider offer equally. Their tracking shows that disadvantaged pupils participate to the same extent as other pupils.

Staff provide helpful and readily accessible pastoral care to pupils. Pupils are confident about accessing this and trust adults to support them with any concerns.

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

Pupils are warmly welcomed into school each day by staff. Typically, relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Many pupils have positive attitudes to their education. They attend regularly and meet the high expectations that staff have for them. However, a notable proportion of pupils miss school too often, losing valuable learning time. Generally, pupils behave well and feel safe. They recognise that incidents of bullying and discrimination are uncommon and are generally well managed.

All pupils are encouraged to participate in wider opportunities that help them to explore their talents and interests. Pupils who have barriers to their wellbeing value the bespoke activities they can access at social times. These support pupils to feel included, while helping them to avoid busier areas of the school.

Typically, pupils achieve well in national examinations. However, disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils are often suitably prepared for their next steps and move on to appropriate destinations. However, some pupils, particularly those with high levels of absence, have notable gaps in their skills and knowledge. Sometimes, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, do not make sufficient progress from their starting points.

Generally, pupils enjoy learning and participate well in lessons. Sixth-form students have consistently positive learning experiences across the curriculum. In other year groups, there is greater variability in how well different subjects are planned and taught. This includes in the personal development programme. Sometimes, pupils are not as clear as they should

be about equality and respectful relationships. This affects how well prepared some pupils are for life in modern Britain.

Staff typically understand the barriers to learning and/or wellbeing faced by pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. However, there is variability in how effectively these barriers are reduced in the classroom.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that absence rates are reduced as quickly as possible, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff consistently identify any misconceptions or knowledge gaps that pupils have, and support pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to close those gaps as swiftly as possible so that they can achieve more securely.
 - Leaders should continue to improve the ambition and coherence of the curriculum across all subjects, ensuring a clear and consistent approach, particularly in writing.
 - Leaders should ensure that consistently effective teaching across the school supports pupils to secure their knowledge in all aspects of relationships and sex education and health education, and citizenship.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils consistently enables them to access learning independently.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Cambrian 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, Richard Evans, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anthony Cook.

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 school leadership team, members of staff, groups of pupils, trust leaders, members of the board of trustees and representatives from the local governing body 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 10 alternative provisions, including 8 that are unregistered.

Lead inspector:

Tash Hurtado, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Julia Mortimore, Ofsted Inspector

Gemma Piper, Ofsted Inspector

Andy Johnson, Ofsted Inspector

Fae Dean, Ofsted Inspector

Wendy Hemmingsley, 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,763

Well 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

2,205

Well 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)

19.51%

Below 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

3.18%

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

17.70%

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)	43.8%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47.9%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	48.1%	45.3%	Close to average

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)	45.4	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44.0	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46.6	46.3	Close to average

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)	-0.02	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.28	-0.03	Above

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)	14.3%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	27.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	18.9%	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 (revised)	29.4	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	30.5	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	29.8	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)	-0.56	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.41	-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)	14.3%	53.1%	-38.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	27.8%	53.1%	-25.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	18.9%	52.4%	-33.5 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)	29.4	50.4	-21.0
2023/24 (final)	30.5	50.0	-19.5
2022/23 (final)	29.8	50.3	-20.5

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)	-0.56	0.16	-0.72
2022/23 (final)	-0.41	0.17	-0.58

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)	93%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	97%	94%	Above

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)	35.45	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35.58	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	36.49	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)	0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.2	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)	11.7%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.5%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.8%	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)	29.1%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	31.5%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	26.3%	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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