

Aston University Engineering Academy

Address: 1 Lister Street, Birmingham, West Midlands, B7 4AG

Unique reference number (URN): 138222

Inspection report: 24 February 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), progress well through the curriculum. They produce high-quality work in both written and practical subjects. Pupils quickly develop the skills and knowledge needed for success.

Sixth-form students achieve well in external examinations, particularly in vocational and technical subjects. Disadvantaged pupils achieve above average outcomes in national examinations at key stage 4.

All pupils and sixth-form students are very well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment. Many sixth-form students, including those with SEND, progress to degree courses and apprenticeships in science, technology, engineering or mathematics.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils understand the importance of high attendance and attend regularly. Pupils who need further help to attend well receive mentoring and pastoral support. This helps to address any barriers to regular attendance.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Leaders have established clear routines that pupils understand and follow. They have put in place a clear system to address conduct issues. Staff understand and use this system consistently. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, consistently meet the school's expectations. Pupils behave maturely and professionally.

The school is calm and orderly. Staff and pupils enjoy harmonious relationships. Pupils know that staff care for them. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They work well together and show high levels of respect. Students in the sixth form have a strong sense of belonging to the school community. Pupils who need extra help to meet expectations receive tailored support and adaptations that help them improve their behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have developed a well-planned, ambitious curriculum that meets pupils' aspirations. Pupils in Year 9 benefit from a curriculum that provides secure foundations for key stage 4 and post-16 courses. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and the expertise needed to deliver the curriculum. Leaders provide staff with training so they can deliver specialist courses confidently.

Leaders have a precise understanding of the quality of the curriculum and how it is delivered. This ensures that courses continue to meet pupils' needs. Sixth-form students choose from a range of pathways matched to their aspirations and career goals. All pupils study engineering in key stage 4 and leaders ensure they have the mathematical knowledge required for success.

The curriculum is taught consistently well. Teachers explain new learning clearly and check understanding effectively so that misconceptions are addressed. Pupils who need extra help with their reading or mathematics receive carefully planned support. Teachers use highly effective strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the curriculum. Students in the sixth form receive personalised feedback that helps them improve their work.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created an inclusive school, where pupils and sixth-form students have their needs accurately identified and met. They quickly recognise the additional needs that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) may have. They work effectively with external professionals and parents and carers to ensure that pupils get the support they need.

Leaders ensure that staff receive detailed information about the needs of pupils with SEND and how to meet them. Staff also receive high-quality training on how to address barriers to learning. As a result, staff skilfully use strategies that allow pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and achieve well.

The school uses a range of interventions to support pupils' progress through the curriculum. Leaders carefully track these to ensure they are effective. For example, pupils who need extra support with reading receive carefully planned support that helps them to improve rapidly.

Leaders use additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant, effectively so that disadvantaged pupils receive the support they need. As a result, they are fully included in all aspects of school life. For example, the school funds enrichment activities for these pupils so that they have high-quality experiences that enhance the curriculum and their opportunities at school.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that still need some further improvement. They regularly review all areas of the school's work to ensure high standards are maintained. They have taken effective action to continue improving the school. Governors have the necessary skills and expertise to support and challenge leaders. They carry out their statutory duties effectively. Leaders and governors ensure their work is focused on improving pupils' and students' educational experiences. Furthermore, they ensure the curriculum is high quality and addresses skills gaps in local and national technical industries.

Leaders have developed high-quality opportunities for professional learning that supports staff to deliver the curriculum effectively. They also ensure that leaders at all levels have the skills and knowledge they need to maintain high standards and to make a positive contribution across the school.

The school is very well led and managed. Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders support them well. Leaders are considerate of their workload and wellbeing. They have

created a culture, where all staff work together in the best interests of pupils. The school communicates well with parents and carers. Many parents appreciate the high-quality teaching, care and support their child receives.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have constructed a well-planned and inclusive programme for pupils' personal development. This gives pupils the knowledge, skills and experiences that prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships, other cultures and religions and how to live healthily. They learn about online safety and how to stay safe in the community. Pupils have opportunities to discuss and debate important issues, such as democracy and the experiences of refugees. Pupils learn about aspects of a person's identity that are protected by law, prejudice and diversity. They understand the importance of being respectful and tolerant of others, who may be different to them. Sixth-form students also learn about issues, such as consent and the dangers of substance abuse. This prepares them well for adulthood.

The school provides excellent experiences for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which develop their confidence, resilience and character. For example, the Combined Cadet Force sessions help pupils develop effective teamwork and leadership. There are also a wide range of trips and visits that enhance the curriculum and broaden pupils' experiences. For example, pupils have opportunities to experience ski trips and voluntary work in Sierra Leone.

The school's careers provision is excellent. Pupils learn about different careers throughout their time at school. They have many opportunities to engage with employers. Sixth-form students learn about the pathways available to them after they leave. As a result, students are extremely well informed about university courses, apprenticeships and routes into employment.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard ●

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that meets students' aspirations. Students choose from a range of academic, technical and vocational courses that support their future career goals. Teachers deliver the curriculum consistently well. They have expert subject knowledge and explain new learning clearly and logically. They make highly effective adaptations to their teaching so that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can achieve well. Students' work demonstrates a secure understanding of what they have learned. Students, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, achieve well in public examinations.

Leaders ensure that students are well informed about the options available to them after leaving the sixth form. They visit universities and careers fairs and engage meaningfully with employers. Many students progress to high-quality university courses, apprenticeships and work-based training.

There are many opportunities in the sixth form for students to develop their character and learn about key issues. For example, students learn about sexual health, the dangers of drug abuse and how to manage their finances. This prepares them well for adulthood. Students also enjoy taking part in enrichment activities, such as the plane-building project and fundraising for charities.

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

Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well at this welcoming school. They are well supported by teachers and value the advice and guidance they receive. The curriculum enables pupils to engage in learning that supports their aspirations. All pupils receive a high-quality education that prepares them well for their next steps into education, employment or training. Leaders quickly identify and address any barriers to learning. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities successfully access the same ambitious curriculum.

Leaders ensure that pupils' diverse backgrounds are celebrated. Pupils settle in quickly, when they begin their education at the school. They get along well and are respectful to each other and to staff. They behave maturely in lessons and at social times. Pupils feel safe and have no concerns about bullying. They are confident that if it did occur, it would be dealt with swiftly. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, attend school regularly.

Pupils learn about important issues, such as democracy, and how to be safe in the community. As a result, they are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders ensure pupils are provided with an extensive enrichment programme in which they can all participate. For example, all pupils in Year 9 take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and the Combined Cadet Force. This develops pupils' character, leadership skills and resilience. Pupils also volunteer and raise money for charity, helping them understand how they can contribute positively to society. Pupils enjoy participating in the plane build and car build projects. Pupils also enjoy taking part in a variety of clubs, including football, basketball and debating.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to refine teaching so that pupils build their knowledge and skills with even more depth and confidence as they move through the curriculum.

About this inspection

This school is part of Aston University STEM Education 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), who is also the executive principal, Daniel Locke-Wheaton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Professor Osama Khan.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the CEO and executive principal and other leaders from the school and from the trust. An inspector spoke with members of the board of trustees and others responsible for governance.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

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 school is an University Technical College.

The school uses no alternative provision.

Executive Principal: Daniel Locke-Wheaton

Lead inspector:

Paul Halcro, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Mark Sims, Ofsted Inspector

Jacqui Swindlehurst, Ofsted Inspector

Will Keddie, Ofsted Inspector

Joel Dalhouse, His Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Lawson, 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 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

875

Close to 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

600

Well 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)

50.21%

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

0.11%

Well 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

6.63%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well 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 (revised)	48.1%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	52.5%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	39.5%	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)	44.1	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	42.5	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	42.4	46.3	Close to average

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)	46.8%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	37.5%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	38.1%	25.2%	Above

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)	42.3	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	36.9	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.2	35.0	Above

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)	46.8%	53.1%	-6.3 pp
2023/24 (final)	37.5%	53.1%	-15.6 pp
2022/23 (final)	38.1%	52.4%	-14.3 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)	42.3	50.4	-8.1
2023/24 (final)	36.9	50.0	-13.2
2022/23 (final)	40.2	50.3	-10.1

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)	98%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	92%	94%	Not available

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)	29.87	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	26.91	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	26.97	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)	-0.5	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.5	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)	6.1%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.6%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.8%	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)	19.8%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	26.5%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	25.3%	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.

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