

# Horbury Academy

**Address:** Wakefield Road, WF4 5HE

**Unique reference number (URN):** 138707

## Inspection report: 6 January 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 secure the essential knowledge they need early on in their education to set them up well for later learning. Pupils learn the skills and attributes they need to learn independently and effectively. They are inquisitive and seek to develop their own understanding further. Pupils are highly motivated to do their best.

Achievement in national tests and assessments has been consistently positive over time. In many subjects, pupils at the school out perform their peers nationally by some margin. Pupils make excellent progress during their time at school. They are extremely well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. Disadvantaged pupils achieve very well and produce work of a high quality. Gaps in performance between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are narrowing quickly. Outcomes in subjects that previously underperformed have been effectively addressed by leaders. Pupils now achieve highly throughout the school.

### Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have a very effective understanding of the quality of curriculum and teaching at the school. Consistent, high expectations for how lessons should be taught are in place. The curriculum is taught very effectively. New learning builds expertly on what pupils already know and can do. Staff focus on the essential knowledge and skills pupils need to master in each lesson. Previous topics are revisited so that pupils do not forget important learning.

Staff check precisely what pupils know so they can address any issues in future lessons. Adaptations, such as different resources or additional explanations, are carefully tailored to pupils' needs. In the vast majority of cases, these are highly effective at helping pupils learn the intended curriculum.

Strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well understood by staff. Additional support for pupils who are still learning to read is making a significant difference to their levels of understanding. Leaders consistently remove barriers to learning. The curriculum and teaching approaches used at the school effectively support pupils to achieve excellent outcomes.

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## Expected standard

### Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate knowledge of pupils' needs. Staff receive high-quality training that helps them to break down barriers to learning. The quality of pastoral care and education for disadvantaged pupils is central to decisions made at the school. Leaders monitor disadvantaged pupils' progress carefully to ensure they achieve well.

Personalised support and intervention is highly effective at meeting individual pupils' needs. Some whole-school strategies to improve disadvantaged pupils' educational experience are less embedded than others. This limits the impact of the school's work to some degree. Leaders have made strategic decisions about how staff will support disadvantaged pupils across the school. Partnership working with professionals, parents and outside agencies is highly effective. Several projects the school is involved in are innovative and are beginning to make a significant difference to disadvantaged pupils' education and wellbeing.

Pupil premium funding is utilised very well. Leaders ensure disadvantaged pupils have access to the same opportunities as their peers. Leaders precisely evaluate the impact of the pupil premium funding to ensure it has the desired impact. The school's use of alternative provision is carefully considered and appropriate to the needs of pupils who attend it.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders know their school, its staff and pupils extremely well. They have identified precise development priorities that will make the most difference to pupils' educational experience. Several areas for improvement have been swiftly and effectively addressed. Where more remains to be done, leaders know this is the case. They work tirelessly to achieve their ambitious objectives for the school.

Leaders empower staff and consider their wellbeing when making decisions. When workload is high, leaders recognise and address this.

Professional learning at the school is highly effective. Staff engage in research-informed development projects. Many of these are led by staff themselves. These groups explore new teaching techniques and strategies to identify which will have the greatest impact at the school. This work is sharply focused on securing the best outcomes for pupils. Staff value the many opportunities they receive to develop as professionals. Early career teachers receive additional, targeted support as part of their induction.

Those responsible for governance undertake their roles with skill and rigour. They support the strategic direction of the school but also challenge decisions where appropriate. Governors ensure funding is well spent to benefit pupils, for example, by appointing additional staff in areas of greatest need. Leaders seek external validation for their work to ensure it is of the highest quality. Leaders at all levels make decisions in the best interests of pupils. This helps to improve standards and outcomes, particularly for the most disadvantaged pupils.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** 

The programme for personal development prepares pupils well for life beyond education. Pupils understand how to be active, responsible citizens through the values the school promotes. Examples include taking on leadership roles, helping younger pupils with their reading or visiting a local care home to support residents' wellbeing.

The personal development programme promotes debate and discussion. It encourages pupils to be open minded and respect differences. Pupils understand how the school's values link to those of British society, for example equality of opportunity and free speech. This creates a sense of cohesion at the school. Pupils are taught about the importance of tolerance and respect for other cultures and beliefs. Younger pupils have a more secure understanding of this learning than older ones.

The school's relationships, health and sex education programme is age-appropriate and helps pupils understand how to stay safe and healthy. Older pupils, for example, learn about dealing with exam stress and how to look after their wellbeing. The personal development approach takes account of pupils' different life experiences, and staff sensitively guide more vulnerable pupils toward extra support should they need it.

The school's pastoral care offer is wide ranging and effective. Leaders are committed to all pupils, especially the most disadvantaged, accessing a wide, rich set of experiences. This includes educational visits, foreign trips and extra-curricular clubs. The variety of opportunities, and engagement in them, is growing steadily. However, leaders recognise there is more to do to ensure as many pupils as possible benefit from these.

Careers education and information is available to pupils of all ages. Many older pupils have independent careers advice and guidance. Pupils attend careers fairs, hear from employers and learn about future education pathways. Leaders continue to develop the careers offer so it is embedded across the school.

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## Needs attention ●

### Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Attendance in the school is below average. For some groups of pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged, attendance continues to decline. The school has revisited its attendance strategy and made several changes. Leaders have worked with external agencies to explore new strategies to increase attendance. The attendance team has been strengthened. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' attendance. Attendance is seen as everyone's responsibility and the importance of high attendance is regularly reinforced. Many pupils do attend well. Specific rewards for high rates of attendance are valued by pupils. Despite these strategic changes, some pupils do not attend well enough. There are early signs that recent changes are starting to have a positive impact on attendance at the school, but the full impact of these approaches is not yet felt.

In contrast, pupils' behaviour at the school presents a much more positive picture. Disruption to lessons is rare. There is a purposeful learning environment around the school. Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to their education. They are positively engaged in lessons and ask meaningful questions. Social times are calm and orderly. Pupils interact well with one another and staff. Serious incidents of poor behaviour are rare. When they do happen, they are well dealt with by the school. Suspensions are used appropriately. Older pupils are often role models to younger ones.

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

Values such as ambition, compassion and resilience are embedded across the school. Staff and pupils have a shared ambition for what everyone can achieve. Pupils regularly demonstrate excellent commitment to their learning. Pupils achieve highly, including the most disadvantaged. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils benefit from precise teaching. They know what is expected of them and are resilient to new challenges. Staff understand pupils' individual needs well. Lessons are adapted to help all pupils access and understand new learning. Effective collaboration across the school ensures that pupils achieve their potential.

The majority of pupils conduct themselves well and meet the school's high expectations. There are regular opportunities for them to be rewarded for their effort and achievement. A small proportion of pupils struggle to meet the school's expectations. Support for these pupils to re-engage in their education is having a positive impact on their attitude to learning. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust staff to keep them safe and are confident to report issues they might have. The school has effective systems to track any unkind behaviour or concerns about pupils' wellbeing. These are acted upon swiftly and effectively. Support for pupils' mental health is particularly well considered. Pastoral care is tailored to meet individual pupils' needs. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and supportive.

Despite the positive culture, supportive atmosphere and high expectations at the school, some pupils still do not attend regularly enough. These pupils are often the most disadvantaged and are missing out on important opportunities. Leaders' actions to address the decline in attendance of disadvantaged pupils has only recently begun to have an impact. More remains to be done to ensure all pupils attend in line with, or above, national averages. There is a shared ambition among everyone at the school that this will be achieved rapidly.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the attendance for all groups of pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged, improves in a sustained manner over time.
  - Leaders should further enhance the personal development programme, specifically the engagement levels in enrichment activities and the school's careers programme, so that pupils are increasingly well prepared for life beyond education.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Accord Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Alan Warboys, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Lancashire.

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 executive principal, head of academy and chief executive officer during the inspection. The lead inspector also met those responsible for governance and other staff from the multi-academy trust.

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 7 alternative provisions, including 4 that are unregistered.

Executive Principal: Nicola Walker

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### Lead inspector:

John Linkins, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Steve Lewis, Ofsted Inspector

Martin Featherstone, Ofsted Inspector

Chris Carr, His Majesty's Inspector

Jayne Gaunt, 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 6 January 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**1,075**

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

**1,059**

Close to average

### What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

### Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

**26.33%**

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

**4.09%**

Above 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

17.02%  
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

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 | 51.5%       | 45.2%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 | 52.2%       | 45.9%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 | 54.0%       | 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 | 48.4        | 45.9             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 | 48.9        | 45.9             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 | 49.8        | 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 | 0.32        | -0.03            | Above                          |
| 2022/23 | 0.29        | -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 | 32.5%       | 25.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 | 37.5%       | 25.8%            | Above                          |
| 2022/23 | 22.0%       | 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 | 38.0        | 34.9             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 | 37.1        | 34.6             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 | 33.1        | 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 | -0.10       | -0.57            | Above                          |
| 2022/23 | -0.43       | -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 | 32.5%       | 52.8%                            | -20.3 pp                |
| 2023/24 | 37.5%       | 53.1%                            | -15.6 pp                |

| Year    | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|---------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2022/23 | 22.0%       | 52.4%                            | -30.5 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 | 38.0        | 50.3                             | -12.3                   |
| 2023/24 | 37.1        | 50.0                             | -12.9                   |
| 2022/23 | 33.1        | 50.3                             | -17.2                   |

### 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 | -0.10       | 0.16                             | -0.27                   |
| 2022/23 | -0.43       | 0.17                             | -0.60                   |

## 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 | 92%         | 91%              | Average                        |
| 2022 leavers | 90%         | 93%              | Average                        |
| 2021 leavers | 90%         | 94%              | Below                          |

## Absence

### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

| Year              | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (2 terms) | 9.8%        | 8.1%             | Above                          |
| 2023/24           | 9.5%        | 8.9%             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23           | 8.2%        | 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 terms) | 23.6%       | 21.9%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24           | 25.8%       | 25.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23           | 23.5%       | 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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