

Dormers Wells High School

Address: Dormers Wells Lane, Southall, Middlesex, UB1 3HZ

Unique reference number (URN): 145348

Inspection report: 3 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.

Exceptional

Inclusion

Exceptional 

Leaders place inclusion at the heart of their work. This ensures that pupils who may face barriers to learning flourish. Leaders always have the best interests of pupils at the centre of their decision-making. The school's motto, 'opening the door to success', exemplifies leaders' relentless ambition for all pupils.

The consistent belief that staff have in all pupils transforms pupils' feeling of self-worth. The school raises aspirations for pupils and their families. This is underpinned by leaders' unwavering commitment to the local community.

Leaders' focus on excellence is reflected in the highly effective training that they provide to staff. Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies. This partnership secures expert and coherent support for pupils' aspirations.

Skilled staff ensure that pupils' needs are identified swiftly and accurately. They provide high-quality support and monitor the impact of their actions on pupils' progress keenly, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school's pupil premium strategy is crafted extremely well to enhance the experiences of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders ensure that resources are used wisely and for maximum impact. This includes the provision of effective support for pupils' learning, attendance and enrichment activities. Staff tailor specific support so that different groups of pupils learn effectively and are successful.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard 

Pupils achieve highly across the curriculum. This includes in their knowledge of communication and language, reading and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make strong progress from their starting points, across different subjects.

Pupils learn the intended curriculum extremely well. They secure the knowledge and skills that they need to access increasingly difficult topics. Pupils, particularly those in key stage 4, achieve highly in national tests.

The achievement of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 11 is impressive. Over the last 3 years, the attainment and progress of these pupils are significantly above those of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. This is a direct result of the school's work to identify these pupils and ensure that strategies are in place so that they can achieve their full potential. All pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Leaders have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attendance. The school works closely with pupils and their families to promote good attendance habits. This includes a sharp focus on understanding the barriers that prevent individual pupils from attending school often. The personalised approach that staff take to supporting these pupils is having a significant impact. As a result, all groups of pupils have attendance rates that are much higher than the national averages. Pupils want to attend because they feel like they belong to the school's welcoming community.

Pupils across the school are self-disciplined and respectful. They care about the school and about one another. As a result, incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are rare and never tolerated. The school provides a calm and harmonious learning environment where pupils flourish. The behaviour policy is applied consistently and fairly. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. This ensures that no learning time is wasted. Leaders intervene swiftly and effectively on the rare occasions when pupils need help to reflect on and manage their behaviour. When necessary, appropriate adjustments ensure that all pupils are supported to thrive.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have established a broad, ambitious and imaginative curriculum that is designed carefully to meet the needs of all pupils and prepare them well for their adult lives. Leaders have a precise understanding of how effectively this curriculum is delivered. They ensure that training is focused sharply on building staff expertise.

Teaching is highly effective in helping pupils make consistent progress, including those who join the school later than their peers or those who are new to speaking English. These approaches are having a particularly strong impact for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.

All pupils access the same ambitious curriculum. Teachers demonstrate an excellent understanding of how best to adapt learning when needed. For example, in Year 7 English, adept teacher questioning enables pupils to understand how writers' techniques bring literary texts alive.

Teachers check pupils' learning and understanding often. This means that they can identify and resolve gaps in pupils' knowledge promptly. Teachers help pupils who struggle with reading to develop their confidence and fluency. There is a strong focus in every lesson on developing pupils' vocabulary and their spoken communication. Pupils at the very early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language build their proficiency in spoken and written English rapidly.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders, trustees and governors share a common, ambitious vision for the school and its future. They are tireless in their efforts to ensure that pupils experience a successful education in an environment where they feel valued.

Leaders evaluate the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement systematically. Well-thought-through ways of managing the school's work, and a keen analytical approach, ensure that leaders make wise decisions that put pupils' interests first.

Trustees and governors are knowledgeable about their roles and about the school's particular context. They hold leaders properly to account. Trustees and governors embrace challenge and maintain the highest expectations so that all pupils can excel.

Staff morale is high. They value how leaders ensure that staff workload is manageable and that their wellbeing is supported. Leaders offer a substantial training programme to develop staff expertise. Those in the early stages of their career appreciate the guidance provided, while more-established staff can follow leadership pathways and take qualifications. Leaders have established many collaborative initiatives with other schools and providers. This allows them to share their own expert practice and to learn from the work of others.

The school is consistently pushing for excellence in all that it does. Leaders are unrelenting in their ambition for all pupils. They use funding wisely to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have equal access to high-quality educational provision. All staff embrace the school's aim to improve the life chances of every pupil, including those who may face barriers to learning.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing are a high priority at this school. Leaders provide a well-structured programme that helps pupils grow into confident, respectful and resilient young people. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about fundamental British values and their relevance to modern life. Pupils have a secure understanding of important issues such as online safety and equality. They know how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships. The school promotes tolerance and celebrates diversity.

Pastoral care is strong and responsive. Staff know pupils well and act quickly when extra support is needed. Specialist provision, including mentoring and counselling, is available for pupils facing challenges. Pupils say they feel well supported.

The school offers a wide range of enrichment activities, clubs and trips. These opportunities help pupils develop their confidence, and their teamwork and leadership skills. For example, Year 7 pupils can attend an annual scout camp. All pupils in key stage 3 learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils engage positively in the broad enrichment offer and are supported well by the school. For instance, any Year 7 pupils who are not confident when moving to secondary school benefit from extensive support from trained Year 10 mentors, as part of the school's 'Stepping Stones' programme.

Careers education begins early and is planned carefully. Pupils receive impartial careers advice. They experience employer-led events, workplace visits and tailored guidance as they move through the school. Post-16 students benefit from targeted support for university and apprenticeship applications.

Leaders have thought carefully about how to raise the aspirations of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. The school's approach ensures that pupils are well prepared for academic success, as well as life beyond school. Pupils gain the knowledge, skills and character that they need to thrive. Leaders are rightly proud of the extremely broad range of

destinations to which pupils progress. This includes prestigious universities in the UK and worldwide.

Expected standard

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

The school operates a highly inclusive post-16 provision that offers a broad range of A-level subjects, alongside level 3 applied courses. This demonstrates leaders' commitment to supporting the majority of pupils to progress to post-16 study and beyond.

Leaders have a thorough understanding of how well students perform on post-16 courses. Historically, this performance did not meet the school's high expectations for all courses. As a result, leaders implemented a robust improvement strategy, which is having a positive impact. This is seen in students' achievements in lessons and in their work, and it is starting to improve in published results. In lessons, students demonstrate an eagerness for academic enquiry and talk with confidence about their learning. Students perform particularly well on level 3 applied courses, where both attainment and progress are significantly above national averages.

Students benefit from a rich personal development offer. They have a keen sense of responsibility and service. They develop their leadership skills, for example, by supporting younger pupils with their study skills. Leaders ensure that students get dedicated support for university and apprenticeship applications. Work-related learning prepares students well for making informed career choices.

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

Ambition is at the centre of school life at Dormers Wells High School. Staff expect all pupils to achieve their potential. Pupils appreciate this expectation and the high-quality education that they receive. Dedicated subject specialists deliver the ambitious and very well-designed curriculum. Pupils' achievements in national examinations at the end of Year 11 have been above the national average for several years. Pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve highly. This ensures that pupils move on to aspirational and well-matched destinations when they leave the school.

There is a thriving sense of community at this school. Staff forge strong relationships with pupils and provide high-quality pastoral care. The school has an expert team of trained professionals, therapists and mentors who work effectively with pupils to break down barriers to their learning and wellbeing. All of this contributes to the highly inclusive ethos of the school.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They have excellent school attendance. They feel safe when there, and say bullying is rare and always dealt with swiftly. Pupils love their learning and approach their studies with an admirable maturity. They believe they can achieve highly

because staff reinforce this message consistently. Any potential barriers to learning are seen as opportunities to be embraced.

Pupils' personal development is at the core of everything the school does. Pupils can access a broad range of opportunities that enrich the curriculum, including participating in many clubs and theatre trips. These include chess, engineering and many sporting and musical activities. Pupils learn how to work together and gain new skills.

The school ensures that all pupils can access the full range of opportunities on offer. High-quality careers advice and guidance run through the school's work. Staff work in partnership with many local employers. Work experience opportunities and visits to colleges and universities ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the impact of the taught curriculum is of a consistently high level across all subjects within the post-16 provision.
 - Leaders should sustain and build on the high standards in all curriculum subjects to make sure that pupils' knowledge gaps are eliminated so that they can achieve their full potential.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Dormers Wells 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, Roisin Walsh, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Subroto Mozumdar.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspectors are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the chairs of the local governing body and the trustees, senior leaders and other leaders 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 uses 3 alternative provisions, all of which are registered.

Headteacher: Roisin Walsh

Lead inspector:

Susan Maguire, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Laurence John King, Ofsted Inspector

Christine Raeside, Ofsted Inspector

Nigel Clemens, Ofsted Inspector

Ian Cooksey, Ofsted Inspector

Janice Howkins, 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,485

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

1,400

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)

33.97%

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

1.89%

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

5.39%

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

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)

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 (provisional)	54.4%	45.2%	Above
2023/24 (final)	56.4%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	60.1%	45.3%	Above

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 (provisional)	48.9	45.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	49.6	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	52.4	46.3	Above

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)	0.63	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.69	-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 (provisional)	51.6%	25.6%	Above
2023/24 (final)	50.0%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	60.3%	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 (provisional)	46.6	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	47.2	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	53.0	35.0	Above

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	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.83	-0.57	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 (provisional)	51.6%	52.8%	-1.3 pp
2023/24 (final)	50.0%	53.1%	-3.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	60.3%	52.4%	7.9 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	46.6	50.3	-3.7

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	47.2	50.0	-2.8
2022/23 (final)	53.0	50.3	2.7

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	0.40
2022/23 (final)	0.83	0.17	0.66

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)	95%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	97%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	32.78	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	29.50	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	29.59	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)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.4	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)	5.7%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.5%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	9.0%	Below

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)	12.4%	21.9%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.8%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	16.2%	26.5%	Below

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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