

Wellbrook School

Address: Station Road, Hatton, Derby, Derbyshire, DE65 5EH

Unique reference number (URN): 150920

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.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Many pupils join the school following a disrupted period of education. They arrive working at levels below what is typically expected. However, from these starting points, they achieve well. The school helps them to catch up quickly. The school monitors pupils' progress through the curriculum closely.

Pupils' responses in lessons, their work in books and discussions with them, show that they typically remember what they have learned. For example, some pupils demonstrated an impressive recall of spelling rules they have learned. In a humanities lesson, pupils gave a detailed account of how the United Kingdom is governed.

Overall, any gaps in pupils' knowledge of English and mathematics are usually identified and addressed. However, some weaknesses in pupils' written work remain. Some pupils do not know how to form letters correctly and cannot write fluently.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Many pupils join the school with a history of poor attendance. Many have missed significant periods of their education. However, from these starting points, pupils' attendance improves both rapidly and dramatically. The school skilfully identifies barriers to positive attendance and puts the right actions in place to tackle these. It takes the views of pupils and parents fully into account when planning how to help. The processes for following up and challenging unexplained absences are robust. Leaders monitor and evaluate trends and patterns of attendance closely.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Typically, pupils live up to these. They follow the school's 'Five Rs' well. At the end of each lesson, they reflect on their performance against these. Daily, they consider what has gone well and what can be improved with their key workers. The school is typically calm, orderly and respectful.

Staff know pupils well. They understand what motivates them and what does not. They provide expert help when pupils become dysregulated. Any incidents of serious behaviour are dealt with sensitively and robustly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Overall, the school's curriculum is well organised. It makes clear what pupils will learn at each stage of their education. It builds cumulatively on what has gone before. It prepares pupils well for what they will learn next. However, in a small number of places, the curriculum does not make clear the precise content that pupils are expected to know and remember.

Reading is prioritised. Pupils study a wide range of texts, genres and authors. Those at the earliest stages of learning to read are well supported. The school's phonics programme is well organised and implemented well.

Teachers plan and deliver lessons that stimulate pupils' interests. Lessons are lively and engaging. They are closely aligned to the intent of the curriculum. Teachers check for gaps in pupils' understanding and ensure that these are addressed.

Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. They know where teaching is working well and where improvements can be secured. They provide regular, well-targeted training that ensures that staff have the knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum. Leaders ensure that staff know how to adapt teaching to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers typically do this well.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school is inclusive. It ensures that pupils' needs are fully evaluated and understood. The curriculum and the provision put in place are well aligned to pupils' needs. As such, overtime, the barriers that pupils face are reduced successfully. The school pays close attention to the long-term targets set out in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. In daily key-worker discussions, pupils reflect on the progress that they are making. The school checks the steps that pupils make towards these. However, in a small number of cases, the school has not identified what pupils need to achieve in the short and medium term, to realise the longer-term goals that their EHC plans set out.

Staff training is regular. It results in teachers knowing how to adapt their teaching in light of pupils' needs. Training covers a broad range of topics related to pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school works in close partnership with parents and carers. Parents value the 'Wellbrook Weekly' that tells them how their child is getting on. The school works effectively with other agencies and professionals to provide the support that pupils need.

The school understands its responsibilities regarding pupils who are looked after. It carries out these duties diligently.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a nurturing and caring school in which pupils are put first. They have an astute understanding of what is working well and what can improve further. They prioritise the right things. They regularly seek the views of pupils, parents and staff and act on what they find out. Leaders have a systematic approach to quality assuring the school's work. However, they do not always evaluate the impact that their work has on the full range of pupil groups as well as they could.

The proprietor has the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to carry out their role. They provide leaders with an effective balance of challenge and support. They ensure that they are challenged in order to secure the best possible provision.

Staff are unanimously proud to work at the school. They praise leaders' consideration of their workload and wellbeing. They feel valued and benefit from a robust training programme that is well matched to their roles.

Parents hold the school in high esteem. One parent summed up the views of many when they said, 'Wellbrook is a brilliant setting for my child, who has improved so much. I cannot fault any aspect of the school. I receive so much support.'

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from an ambitious personal development programme. Well-planned and sequenced programmes for personal, social, health and economic education and relationships and sex education build pupils' knowledge cumulatively. Pupils revisit and deepen important learning over time. They learn how to stay safe in a range of contexts, including online, in the community and in relationships.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced across the curriculum and through the wider experiences on offer. Pupils learn about a wide range of faiths, cultures and traditions. They understand fundamental British values and the important laws that we have to protect us in our country.

The wider curriculum offer is rich, inclusive and engaging. Participation in activities such as mountain biking, visits to places of worship, fishing, air riflery, archery and climbing broadens pupils' cultural capital. The school ensures that all pupils make good use of these. Pupils contribute positively to the local community, including through involvement with local events and working in partnership with care homes for old people. The school council plays an active role in shaping the school. Members are routinely consulted on changes to school policies. Their influence leads to tangible improvements, including to the way that breaktimes are organised, the management of mobile phones and expanding the range of resources available.

Careers education is well structured. It prepares pupils effectively for their next steps. Pupils receive impartial, independent guidance, meet a range of employers and providers and benefit from one-to-one advice.

Pastoral support is strong. Daily contact with key workers, alongside access to therapeutic services, ensures that pupils feel listened to and know who to turn to. Loki and Olwen, the school's dogs, play an important role in the school's therapy offer.

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

This recently opened school is doing its pupils proud. Leaders have created a school in which pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully understood and provided for. The school skilfully evaluates each pupil's SEND and puts in place the support that they need to thrive. As a result, from their relative starting points, pupils achieve well. They are happy and feel safe.

Behaviour is typically positive. The recently introduced 'Five Rs' help pupils to understand what is expected of them. Pupils do their utmost to be in the right place at the right time, show resilience, respect others and property and use the 'right speech'. Pupils openly reflect on how well they have modelled each of these at the end of each lesson. They are eager to

get holes in their 'punch cards' that recognise and reward their successes. Staff know what motivates pupils. Pupils feel valued.

Pupils enjoy learning. They engage positively with their teachers. They increasingly remember what they have learned. Pupils are keen to share their thinking and talk about their learning. They respond well to praise and suggestions for improvement.

Pupils are well prepared for life beyond the school. A broad and varied enrichment programme allows them to try new activities, including archery, rifle shooting, climbing and visits to a range of places. Over time, pupils gain a strong understanding of fundamental British values and the differences in people that the law protects. They learn what discrimination is and why it is unacceptable. Bullying is rare. Pupils are happy that it is dealt with robustly when it does occur.

Over time, pupils' attendance improves significantly. Many who have previously struggled to attend school now do so regularly.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the school consistently considers what pupils need to achieve in the short and medium term to meet the longer-term goals set out in education, health and care plans.
 - The school should ensure that the curriculum, across all subjects, consistently sets out the precise content that pupils are expected to know and remember.
 - Leaders should ensure that weaknesses in pupils' written work are consistently addressed so that all pupils develop an accurate and fluent handwriting style.
 - When carrying out quality assurance work, leaders should ensure that they more carefully consider the impact of the school's work across the full range of pupil groups that make up the school.
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About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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 headteacher, senior leaders, groups of staff and pupils and the chair of the proprietor body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and moderate learning difficulties and/or a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have education, health and care plans.

The school does not use any alternative providers.

This was the school’s first standard inspection since opening in October 2024. The number on roll has risen from 6 pupil to 20 since the school opened.

The chair of the proprietor body is Anita Sharma.

The annual fees currently charged are from £65,00 to £112,000.

The school’s email address is admin@wellbrookschoo.co.uk

Headteacher: Claire Howells

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

1. Quality of education provided	Standards met
All standards have been met.	
2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	Standards met
All standards have been met.	
3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils	Standards met
All standards have been met.	
4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	Standards met
All standards have been met.	

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:

Vic Wilkinson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

George Huthart, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 24 February 2026

Total pupils

20

School capacity

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

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.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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