

Chiltern Way Academy

Address: Church Lane, Wendover, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6NL

Unique reference number (URN): 142695

Inspection report: 3 March 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 

Very high standards of inclusion that transform pupils' experiences have been sustained over time and through a period of change. The school has doubled in size rapidly to meet the needs of pupils with a wider range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Across the school, there is a great sense of community and belonging. Pupils with varied and multiple needs achieve well and thrive.

Leaders swiftly and accurately identify pupils' needs. Specific support is embedded across the school and implemented promptly. Systems to monitor pupils' achievements are rigorous. Leaders regularly review and adapt strategies to maximise their impact. Staff are very well trained to identify and reduce barriers to learning. Inclusive teaching practices are embedded across the school.

Leaders are committed to partnership working. They engage proactively with the local authority and advisory services to ensure that as many local pupils as possible benefit from their inclusive culture. Targeted support for disadvantaged pupils helps them to overcome barriers to learning and/or wellbeing. Leaders carefully monitor the use of pupil premium funding to ensure interventions remain impactful. Leaders carefully consider the use alternative provision to enhance the experiences and outcomes of pupils. Pupils achieve very well from their starting points. They gain a range of appropriate qualifications. Over time, pupils have been very well prepared for their next steps due to barriers being reduced highly effectively.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard 

Pupils learn successfully across the curriculum. They demonstrate enthusiasm and confidence when speaking about their learning. Pupils progress consistently well from their starting points through the broad and well-planned curriculum. Pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills. They produce high-quality work, both in academic subjects and vocational areas. Pupils' work shows high expectations and a sense of pride. Pupils achieve well in the broad range of qualifications the school offers. Most pupils finish key stage 4 with a range of GCSEs and vocational qualifications that are tailored to their individual needs and interests.

Pupils demonstrate increasing independence and motivation as they move through the school. This is because staff understand pupils' needs, including those of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps academically, emotionally, behaviourally and socially. As a result of the school's work, the vast majority of pupils remain in education or employment when they leave the school.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

The school prioritises attendance for all pupils. There is always an expectation pupils will attend. Building relationships with pupils and families underpins this work. The school works closely with wider agencies to improve attendance. Whole school approaches are enhanced by the personalised support that pupils receive. Leaders analyse information in detail for individuals and groups. They use this information to refine their strategies to remove barriers to attendance. As a result of the school's work, attendance has improved over time. There are notable improvements for some individuals, particularly those who have been out of school for significant periods of time.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is impressive and there is a highly positive culture. Leaders set and uphold high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Skilful staff model these expectations effectively. As a result, pupils behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are taught to understand their feelings and behaviours. This enables them to manage their own behaviours with greater independence as they progress through the school. Pupils enjoy their learning and try hard in lessons. Pupils are supportive and respectful of one another and staff. If bullying occurs, it is quickly addressed. Relationships are built on trust and kindness.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders use detailed knowledge of pupils to ensure the curriculum and teaching is appropriate for pupils' needs. Leaders constantly evolve the curriculum, teaching and provision to ensure they remain effective for the changing cohorts.

Teachers are responsive to pupils' individual needs. They adapt their teaching to best support learning. Leaders are acutely aware of the barriers that pupils face and ensure the curriculum is implemented consistently well across the school. The school has a rigorous and consistent approach to teaching across all classes, known as 'The Chiltern Way'. Pupils appreciate this consistent approach and say it helps them with their learning. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and address misconceptions in the moment. This supports pupils to progress well through the intended curriculum.

There is a systematic, well-designed approach to developing reading, writing and mathematical skills throughout the school. Any gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified promptly. Support is provided to address these gaps swiftly. Skilled and knowledgeable teachers make very effective choices about what to teach and how to support pupils' engagement. Teachers focus on removing barriers to learning without lowering expectations. Teaching is supported by high-quality training. This helps the school maintain consistently high standards across different sites.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders are role models of aspiration, ambition and high expectations. Leaders and those responsible for governance have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Their work has ensured that strong standards across all areas have been maintained over time, throughout a period of change. They have ensured a collaborative

approach to development across the whole team. They successfully support staff to deliver these developments and staff are positive about their contribution. The decisions that leaders make are in the best interests of pupils. Leaders have sustained a highly inclusive ethos.

Those responsible for governance know the school well. They speak passionately and knowledgeably about their work. They support and challenge leaders effectively. They know their roles and responsibilities as a result of the training they receive and the support they provide to one another. They have increased their capacity to meet their duties further through recruitment, supported by an external governor review.

Leaders develop and maintain constructive relationships with parents, wider agencies and professionals. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. Leaders are rightly proud of their work supporting the local authority and other schools. Leaders identify and prioritise training for staff appropriately. It is delivered in a considered way. Staff feel well supported with workload and wellbeing. They enjoy working in the school and value opportunities for development. Leaders and staff at all levels are passionate about improving the life chances for pupils at the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

There is a comprehensive and well-thought-out programme of personal development across the school. The programme is available to all pupils and barriers to access are removed. The content is well sequenced and adapted in response to pupils' individual needs and contexts. The result of the programme is pupils who are confident and resilient and well prepared for life beyond school. Leaders' knowledge of pupils enables highly effective, personalised pastoral support to be provided. Careers education is a strength, particularly in the sixth form.

There is a comprehensive life skills programme across the school that includes important skills for independence such as money management, use of public transport and how to manage relationships and conflict. The programme is very carefully considered and strategically planned to ensure that pupils are prepared for specific challenges they may encounter in everyday scenarios. The careful design reflects the school's effective focus on preparing pupils for independence.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities to develop careers knowledge. A comprehensive careers and work experience programme is a particular strength. There is a dedicated job coach who works with businesses to support students into work experience. Pupils describe that the job coach goes 'the extra mile' in helping them to secure purposeful work experience. The success of this work is evident in consistently high levels of pupils successfully moving into education and training when they leave school.

The school prioritises personal development for all its pupils, with tailored support for individual pupils' needs where necessary. Pupils have regular opportunities to consider and debate topical issues, including regular opportunities to debate issues relating to life in modern Britain. Pupils are very well prepared for adulthood. They have the skills to participate in society, and are supported to be as healthy and independent as possible.

The carefully considered post-16 curriculum is taught consistently well. Leaders have constructed a study programme that can be tailored to an individual student's interests and needs. It is always focused on high aspirations and preparation for realistic next steps.

Lessons in academic and vocational subjects are taught in small groups. In most subjects, students are working towards accreditation. Teaching is tailored to individual needs, interests and the context of the students. Skilled teachers deliver it effectively to all students. Students make good progress towards accreditation from their starting points and achieve a wide range of qualifications that enable them to progress with their education or into work.

A strength of the sixth form is its work experience programme. All students attend a placement. This is supported by the school's dedicated job coach, who works with providers to ensure that they know how best to support the student and provide the best chance of success for the placement. Students speak with enthusiasm about their placement and how this is preparing them for their next steps. The transition into the workplace is bespoke for each student.

Students benefit from an enrichment programme that offers a diverse range of opportunities. Students are very well prepared for their next steps.

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

Pupils, who all have special educational needs and/or disabilities, feel valued at this school and enjoy attending. They develop a deep sense of belonging. This is the result of staff creating warm and trusting professional relationships with them. Pupils trust that staff will help them. They know they will be supported to face challenges. For many pupils, this is their first positive experience of school and education.

Pupils across the four school sites are consistently well supported by staff. They are helped to develop strategies to manage their own behaviour. As a result of the work of skilled and knowledgeable staff, behaviour across the school is calm and respectful. Staff respond quickly to provide additional support for pupils who require it. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with bullying if it occurs. This helps them feel happy and safe.

Pupils are provided with opportunities and support to become increasingly confident and resilient. They feel they belong to the school community and experience the community beyond the school gates. An extensive range of carefully selected wider experiences, including visits, trips and sporting events, means that pupils participate in a wealth of opportunities they may not otherwise have. Many pupils achieve gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards by the time they leave.

Pupils benefit from consistent approaches and high-quality teaching across the school. Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils in the school. Pupils learn and make progress through a well-planned curriculum. Older pupils have access to a wide range of qualifications. A comprehensive careers and work experience programme prepares pupils for independence. The curriculum is tailored to the school's mission to 'Get them a job'. This

results in pupils being ambitious and aspirational. They are knowledgeable about future choices. They are very well prepared for their next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas, refining and embedding their identified priorities for improvement, in order to produce a transformational impact for all pupils' experiences and outcomes.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Chiltern Way 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 (CEO), Ian McCaul, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Mortimer.

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 a range of school and trust leaders, the CEO, the chair of the trust, trustees and members of the local governing committee. Inspectors also spoke with pupils and staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

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:

Since the previous inspection, the school has increased in size and it now operates from four sites. At the time of the inspection, there were 323 pupils on roll.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, autistic spectrum conditions and speech, language and communication needs. Pupils have typically experienced difficulties in mainstream or special schools. Some have had periods where they have had very low attendance at their previous school.

The school makes use of 8 unregistered alternative provisions.

The school does not have a resourced provision.

Executive Principal: Callum Mansell

Lead inspector:

Simon Graydon, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Darren Aisthorpe, Ofsted Inspector

Julie Sackett, His Majesty's Inspector

Felix Rayner, 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 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

285

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.

School capacity

412

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

51.88%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

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

100.00%

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.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

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

Location deprivation

Well 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

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
2023 leavers (provisional)	89%
2022 leavers (revised)	88%
2021 leavers (revised)	100%

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
2024/25 (2 term)	21.5%
2023/24 (3 term)	20.6%
2022/23 (3 term)	16.2%

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school
2024/25 (2 term)	50.2%
2023/24 (3 term)	52.3%
2022/23 (3 term)	46.0%

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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