

Cottingham High School

Address: Harland Way, Cottingham, East Yorkshire, HU16 5PX

Unique reference number (URN): 136921

Inspection report: 6 May 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, generally achieve well. They typically develop secure knowledge and skills over time. Pupils move on to appropriate next steps in education, employment or training. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make clear progress from their starting points. They produce work of the same high quality as their peers. For pupils with a personal education plan, their targets and reviews over time show that they also make positive progress.

Mostly, where pupils have gaps in their basic skills, such as reading and mathematics, they catch up quickly. Pupils confidently talk about the difference that this support makes to them. Pupils develop their independence well, such as through the 'purple zone' tasks that teachers set. Class discussions also support pupils to develop their communication skills successfully over time.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, attend school regularly. Despite a drop in attendance last year, pupils' overall attendance remains close to the national average. Leaders have a wide-ranging, well-considered approach to further improve attendance, such as for disadvantaged pupils. This indicates some improvements. This year, less pupils are persistently absent. Leaders check pupils' attendance carefully and take action when necessary. Leaders work collaboratively with wider professionals, such as to support pupils whose health impacts their attendance at school.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The new behaviour policy is built on trusting and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Leaders have identified that, sometimes, some teachers apply the policy less effectively. Pupils generally understand the school rules and follow clear routines. Behaviour in lessons is generally calm and purposeful. Pupils show an interest in their learning. At social times, in the main, pupils manage their behaviour well. A small number of pupils benefit from staff presence and reminders of expectations. Staff in the 'Thrive Centre' provide effective support for pupils, who struggle to manage their own emotions. Leaders review pupils' behaviour carefully. They promptly resolve instances of bullying, discrimination or harassment. Suspensions and exclusions are used appropriately and have reduced over time.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that there is an appropriate, broad curriculum in place. They are methodical in ensuring that pupils develop their skills and knowledge over time. Leaders' work ensures that curriculum content is well considered for each subject and year group. In a few subjects, some aspects of teaching the curriculum are less well thought out to help pupils know more and remember essential information.

Leaders make sure that teachers have secure subject knowledge for the subjects that they teach. Teachers plan 'purple zone' activities into lessons to develop pupils' resilience and independence. Teachers check pupils' understanding of curriculum content effectively. They identify pupils who have not yet secured important basic knowledge and skills, such as in spelling, reading and numeracy. This information helps to inform teaching and ensures that pupils have the key knowledge they need to move on.

Where relevant, pupils receive support from staff in lessons to catch up. Staff also provide effective help for pupils who need extra support over time, such as with their phonics, reading and mathematics. On occasion, the quality of some of the school's support for pupils is not as effective as it could be.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders accurately identify and act on barriers to pupils' success. The school shares helpful information with teachers, such as regular briefings and updates to information about pupils' needs, strengths and learning. Teachers often put the right support in place, which typically reduces the barriers that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), face. Leaders work closely with the local authority to ensure that the school provides appropriate support for pupils with SEND, including those with an education, health and care plan. Pupils who are known, or previously known, to social care receive appropriate support from staff to enable them to make positive progress in their learning.

The school acts swiftly to adapt its support for pupils. The recent introduction of the school's 'Thrive Centre' for pupils draws on advice from wider professionals. In addition, further focused training is provided for staff, so they can effectively meet individual pupils' needs. Additional funding is used suitably to help disadvantaged pupils. For example, it is used well to promote the development of these pupils' skills across English, mathematics and science.

Leaders use alternative provision effectively to enhance the opportunities and support for a small number of pupils. This enables these pupils to work towards qualifications, which are not available in the school. Their studies are appropriate and tailored to each pupil's needs and aspirations.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including trustees and governors, understand the school's context and its strengths. Leaders know where improvements are needed and take quick and appropriate action. For example, their actions have secured improvement in the quality of the curriculum and support improvements in attendance. The joined-up approach between the trust staff, those responsible for governance and school leaders ensures robust and decisive actions are taken. These are rooted in the high quality of care for pupils. Trustees and governors are knowledgeable. They fulfil their statutory duties effectively. There are clear processes for information sharing that help trustees to provide effective support and challenge, which school leaders welcome.

Leaders focus on developing a sense of belonging for pupils, staff and parents. They work hard to build positive relationships with parents and the wider community. Leaders are

visible at school events and actively welcome visitors into the school. Leaders work well with wider professionals, to share information on themes, such as careers or wellbeing, through the 'hub days'. The school has effective working relationships with local primary schools and the local church.

Staff, including those at the start of their career, receive professional learning that is based on research. Leaders have a conscious eye on staff wellbeing and workload. Staff are generally positive about the support they receive and are proud to work at the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a clear and appropriate programme for pupils' personal development. Pupils learn through dedicated lessons, tutor time activities and assemblies. Leaders plan flexibility so that they can quickly respond to local and national incidents or trends. External speakers support this, attending the school to speak to pupils. Pupils know the importance of people's characteristics that are protected by law. Pupils develop an awareness of different faiths and cultures.

Pupils are generally respectful of people's differences. Leaders know pupils well and this enables the school to provide effective pastoral support. Leaders proactively identify pupils, who will benefit from more support. Leaders ensure that respect is lived out in pupils' actions and through skilled reinforcement of their learning. In lessons, pupils learn about the impact of drugs and alcohol. They learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. Skilled staff deliver teaching on these topics in a more individual way for pupils in the 'Thrive Centre' where needed.

Pupils' broaden their experiences through a range of opportunities. These include the science, technology, engineering and mathematics club, 'go-kart track day' and Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Pupils can explore their talents through activities, such as the angling club and the school's recent production of 'Oliver'.

Leaders commitment to developing pupils' sense of community continues beyond the school. Pupils develop links with the local area through litter picking and through engagement with local employers. Pupils have the opportunity to understand their place as a global citizen too. For example, through overseas expeditions and curriculum-based trips to study the battlefields of world wars.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on employability and future readiness. Pupils understand the pathways available to them. The well-thought-out careers curriculum provides opportunities, such as work experience, careers workshops, employer encounters and apprenticeship events. These broaden pupils' horizons and support them to make informed decisions about their lives.

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

Cottingham High School provides a caring and supportive environment for its pupils. Positive relationships between staff and pupils develop pupils' sense of belonging. On the

whole, pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and know that there is an adult they can speak to if they have any concerns.

Typically, pupils behave well. Pupils enjoy spending time with their friends and in activities, such as playing table football. Pupils are confident and keen to engage in conversation. The school's 'Thrive Centre' provides a quiet space that pupils appreciate being able to go to at social times. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are generally respectful of the differences between people. Instances of bullying or the use of discriminatory language are uncommon. Staff deal with these issues swiftly and effectively.

Generally, pupils attend school regularly. Most pupils concentrate and work hard. They enjoy a curriculum that is well considered and meets their needs, including those who join the school mid-year. Pupils achieve well, including disadvantaged pupils. For pupils who face barriers to their learning, staff usually make helpful adjustments to teaching for them in class. This ensures that all pupils, including those with SEND, learn the curriculum securely. Pupils leave well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils access a range of extra-curricular activities that help to build their confidence and develop their interests. For example, pupils can take part in the orchestra, sports clubs, art club and the school production. Some pupils develop leadership skills through the Duke of Edinburgh award and through roles on the student council. Pupils develop their appreciation of the wider community through engagement with local employers and international trips. Pupils' pride in their local area recently benefitted from them helping to choose street names for a nearby housing development.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to scrutinise and act on data to identify and tackle barriers to attendance, so that there is further improvement, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders should ensure that all teachers use the school's behaviour policy consistently, so that even more pupils become reflective, behave with integrity and cooperate well with others.
- Leaders should strengthen the impact of their work to ensure the curriculum is consistently taught well and that any barriers to pupils' success are swiftly and effectively addressed.

About this inspection

This school is part of The Consortium 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), Lizann Lowson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Furlong.

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 CEO of the trust, headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team and the special educational needs coordinator during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with trustees and members of the local governing body.

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 currently makes use of 4 alternative provisions, including 3 that are unregistered.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The school's sixth-form provision closed in September 2025. The school's age range now covers 11 to 16 year olds.

Headteacher: Jay Kerby

Lead inspector:

Lyndsey Reed, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Matthew West, Ofsted Inspector

Jayne Gaunt, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Allen, Ofsted Inspector

Tudor Griffiths, 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 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

869

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

1,411

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

24.00%

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

2.99%

Close to 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

16.92%

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

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)

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 (final)	42.2%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.5%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.0%	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 (final)	45.2	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47.4	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45.7	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 (final)	0.09	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.40	-0.03	Below

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 (final)	27.9%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	17.5%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	16.3%	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 (final)	38.0	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35.6	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.0	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 (final)	-0.57	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-1.25	-0.57	Below

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 (final)	27.9%	53.1%	-25.2 pp
2023/24 (final)	17.5%	53.1%	-35.6 pp
2022/23 (final)	16.3%	52.4%	-36.2 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 (final)	38.0	50.4	-12.5
2023/24 (final)	35.6	50.0	-14.5
2022/23 (final)	34.0	50.3	-16.3

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)	-0.57	0.16	-0.73
2022/23 (final)	-1.25	0.17	-1.42

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 (revised)	93%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	91%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	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 (final)	27.41	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	23.50	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	29.21	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 (final)	-0.6	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.7	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 (3 term)	9.3%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.8%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.0%	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 (3 term)	27.7%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	24.0%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	25.1%	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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