

Haberdashers' Abraham Darby

Address: Ironbridge Road, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire, TF7 5HX

Unique reference number (URN): 135582

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.

Expected standard

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a broad, established post-16 offer that combines academic and vocational routes with appropriate enrichment. Teachers typically teach effective lessons. Students focus well and engage positively with staff. Clear routines promote recall and help students to make progress in lessons. Staff use assessment criteria and questioning to address misconceptions. Students produce work that shows appropriate challenge and progression. However, not all students can explain how teachers' checks help them to address gaps in knowledge or to improve their work. Teachers model expertly to deepen understanding and make timely adaptations so disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access the curriculum. Students generally achieve in line with national figures in external examinations.

Post-16 students demonstrate highly positive behaviour and attitudes. They feel safe, act maturely and build appropriate relationships with staff. An impartial careers programme, including planned work experience, prepares them well for next steps. Staff deliver an engaging, age-appropriate personal development programme, but delivery is inconsistent in places. Students participate in clubs and other extra-curricular opportunities. They act as role models for younger pupils.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils do not attain and progress as well as they should over time. Current published data show that overall pupils' attainment and progress sit below national averages at the end of key stage 4. Disadvantaged pupils' achievement has been close to national averages in subjects, including mathematics, but is not typically secure across all subjects.

In lessons, pupils sometimes move on before securing key knowledge. This means that basic errors are evident in some pupils' work. Tasks do not generally provide sufficient challenge or extended understanding. Pupils in key stage 4 do not typically demonstrate a secure grasp of complex concepts. Not all pupils can explain the key knowledge and skills they are developing.

Interventions to strengthen pupils' core skills run regularly and there are signs of improvement in these skills for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Destination data indicate an improvement for most pupils. Consequently, they are now better prepared for their next stage of education, employment and training.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Overall attendance remains below national averages. Systems to track, challenge and support absence are established and show impact for some pupils, but improvement is not yet typical across all groups. Leaders monitor attendance appropriately through daily checks, contact with families and work with external agencies. Attendance is improving over time, including for specific groups. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities now attend more regularly than previously.

Pupils' behaviour when moving between lessons is variable. Some pupils loiter between lessons, and a small minority respond inappropriately to staff when challenged. Vulnerable pupils do not always receive support in line with their needs and sanctions do not generally improve engagement. Pupils can be passive, where teaching does not build on prior knowledge or challenge them sufficiently.

In lessons, behaviour is usually compliant and learning takes place in a calm and orderly environment. Most teachers can teach pupils without distraction. Social times are generally calm under clear supervision. Pupils say staff deal with bullying when it occurs, and that leaders have increased rewards to promote positive behaviour. Leaders' behaviour systems are increasingly embedded. Sanctions are escalated appropriately and pupils report that these are consistently applied. The use of suspensions has reduced but remains high. This reflects raised expectations across the school.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Staff implement the curriculum inconsistently across lessons and subjects. Teachers do not always clarify the purpose of lessons or match tasks well to pupils' knowledge, so they do not challenge all pupils. Teachers use assessment inconsistently, and feedback does not always help pupils address misconceptions. Teachers do not always use their checks for understanding well enough to support all pupils to make progress in lessons.

Staff run interventions to develop reading and vocabulary, but variable implementation means these do not always improve pupils' reading fluency and comprehension effectively. Staff do not always secure pupils' foundational knowledge with precision. Consequently, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not typically access or understand the full curriculum.

Leaders evaluate the curriculum and teaching accurately and identify clear priorities for improvement. They have constructed a broad, ambitious curriculum. The key stage 3 curriculum maintains breadth, and staff sequence a clear programme of study in key stage 4. Leaders identify essential knowledge and map it across phases, so that pupils build on what they already know.

Teachers possess secure subject knowledge. Common lesson structures and modelling help some pupils understand expectations. In some lessons, teachers frame learning, set purposeful tasks and check understanding so that pupils connect new ideas to prior learning.

Leaders articulate a clear commitment to inclusion. However, there are inconsistencies in how teaching adaptations to support disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are implemented in lessons. There is a lack of robustness to staff training and teaching practices that limit approaches to adaptive teaching. While leaders liaise well with some parents and carers, they have not developed these relationships effectively for all. As a result, some pupils do not access the full curriculum as effectively as they should.

Leaders have strengthened systems for identifying and assessing pupils' needs. Staff receive appropriate information, which supports strategies for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Some staff use this information to tailor adaptations effectively, demonstrating that they know pupils well and understand their individual challenges. Wider support promotes pupils' wellbeing. Leaders commission alternative provision appropriately and maintain effective oversight. The pupil premium strategy is evidence based and aligned with whole school priorities. The school's bespoke pathways for Year 7 and key stage 4 pupils offer small group teaching with specialist staff to support pupils' needs.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders, governors and the trust agree that the school requires sustained and targeted support to drive improvements for the benefit of all pupils. They understand the school's trajectory since the previous inspection. Together, they identify clear, appropriate priorities for the school. A significant staffing restructure has slowed the consistent embedding of improvement strategies. For example, improvements in classroom practice and behaviour have not been as swift or sustained as they should have been. Leaders consider staff workload and wellbeing. However, some staff report high workload arising from recent initiatives to improve the school.

Leaders have ensured they have effective working relationships with external agencies and organisations. Leaders engage positively with parents and the wider community. However, leaders understand the need to continue effective engagement with families. This should ensure families support leaders' renewed high expectations and actions.

Leaders structure professional development to help staff deliver strategies in pupils' best interests, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Early career teachers follow a planned programme with external training, mentoring and departmental support. Staff across the school access professional development aligned to improvement priorities. Most staff say they are proud to work at the school.

Governors remain visible and well informed. The trust provides support and challenge. They hold leaders to account and maintain regular oversight of impact.

Leaders recognise that delivery and recall of the personal development programme varies in places. They are strengthening the programme and oversight to secure greater consistency in 'Insight' lessons. Staff receive training regarding the delivery of content. This is reviewed so staff feel increasingly confident addressing sensitive issues.

The school provides a coherent personal development programme that meets statutory requirements, including for relationships, sex and health education. Leaders map key themes from Year 7 to Year 11 and supplement the taught 'Insight' lessons with assemblies and mentor sessions. The curriculum is responsive to emerging priorities, including bullying and body image. Many pupils speak confidently about consent, protected characteristics and fundamental British values. Pupils know about risks and how to be safe in the wider community and when online. Pupils have an awareness of different cultures and faiths.

Pastoral capacity has increased and staff work with external agencies, including mental health and wellbeing services. This allows for interventions that support emerging pupil needs, which is having a beneficial impact, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Careers education is a positive feature of personal development. Pupils across phases have meaningful encounters with employers and guidance that supports well matched next steps.

Enrichment is well established and valued. Pupils across all key stages can experience leadership opportunities. Pupils benefit from activities, including a school production and a range of sporting and musical clubs that are offered. Pupils also experience a variety of community opportunities and international trips that support their learning outside of the classroom. Participation has risen for most groups, though increasing take up among pupils with SEND remains a priority.

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

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They speak clearly about feeling safe and cared for because trusted adults listen and act when concerns arise. Staff remain vigilant for any safeguarding concerns and use their training effectively. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both in and beyond school. The school's values of 'Aspiration, Respect and Excellence' shape the calm and courteous relationships observed in lessons.

Most pupils enjoy their learning. Leaders provide an ambitious curriculum. Teachers structure some lessons well, and pupils engage with the high expectations staff set. However, teachers deliver lessons with varying levels of consistency and effectiveness. Some pupils do not receive sufficient challenge in their work. The degree to which teachers check understanding varies across subjects. Staff provide visible support for pupils with additional needs and use appropriate plans to guide their work. Even so, teachers do not always apply adaptations consistently, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, while some pupils achieve in line with national averages, others do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils behave calmly in lessons, and behaviour continues to improve. Clearer routines and a positive reward system create a purposeful learning environment. Pupils benefit from strengthened pastoral care, which responds to their individual needs. Although disruption is uncommon, some pupils still interrupt learning in a minority of lessons, and particularly outside classrooms. Staff address bullying whenever it occurs. Attendance continues to rise, though a number of pupils still attend less regularly than they should.

Tutor-time reading and targeted interventions help pupils to catch up, although practice varies. Pupils benefit from appropriate careers guidance. Enrichment and the broad extra-curricular offer, including rugby, netball, music and external visits, support pupils' wellbeing and aspirations. The school's 'Insight' programme supports most pupils to be prepared for life in modern Britain. Sixth-form students experience stronger teaching, and nearly all progress to their chosen destinations, when they leave school.

Next steps

- Leaders and governors must ensure that actions are implemented consistently well and evaluated swiftly, so that all pupils and students receive a high-quality education and raise aspirations.
 - Leaders should continue to, and further strengthen, work with pupils and their families to improve attendance for all.
 - Leaders should continue to ensure that all staff take responsibility for correcting poor behaviour. They should also address pupils' behaviour outside of lessons to secure consistent high standards of behaviour.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff consistently implement effective strategies that enable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to access and learn the full curriculum.
 - Leaders should develop staff expertise to use assessment effectively to quickly identify and address gaps in learning for all pupils and post-16 students.
 - Leaders should make sure that all teachers identify and address misconceptions promptly so that pupils make at least expected progress.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Haberdashers' West Midlands Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Brynley Evans, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Searles.

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 principal, leaders from the school and from the trust, governors, members of teaching and non-teaching staff and several groups of pupils during the inspection. An inspector spoke with the chief executive officer of the 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 2 unregistered alternative provisions.

Principal: Joanne Edgar

Lead inspector:

Andrew Washbourne, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Dan Robinson, Ofsted Inspector

Peter Bassett, Ofsted Inspector

Sultanat Yunus, Ofsted Inspector

Trudi Young, 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 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,058

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

1,100

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

45.05%

Well above 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

2.84%

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

12.57%

Close to 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 (revised)	31.7%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	34.7%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	23.6%	45.3%	Below

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 (revised)	37.7	46.0	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	39.7	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	34.5	46.3	Below

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)	-0.74	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.89	-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 (revised)	16.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	26.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	15.9%	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 (revised)	28.4	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	32.2	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	26.7	35.0	Below

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)	-1.22	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.37	-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 (revised)	16.7%	53.1%	-36.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	26.8%	53.1%	-26.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	15.9%	52.4%	-36.6 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 (revised)	28.4	50.4	-22.0
2023/24 (final)	32.2	50.0	-17.8
2022/23 (final)	26.7	50.3	-23.6

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)	-1.22	0.16	-1.39
2022/23 (final)	-1.37	0.17	-1.54

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)	84%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	91%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	93%	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)	31.48	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	27.59	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	25.05	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)	9.4%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.1%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	11.9%	9.0%	Above

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)	27.2%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	32.9%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	34.7%	26.5%	Above

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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