

Nether Stowe School

Address: St Chad's Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7NB

Unique reference number (URN): 146493

Inspection report: 17 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.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Historically, most pupils' achievement in national examinations has been weak across the majority of subjects. More recently, however, leaders have raised expectations for both the quality and quantity of pupils' work. Pupils have risen to this challenge, and there is clear evidence that they are now making better progress through the curriculum. Their work is more detailed and they are learning key vocabulary and concepts more securely. The school's keen focus on reading is beginning to pay off as pupils' ability to read is improving. Pupils are beginning to develop the foundational skills that they need to be more successful and are better prepared for their next steps.

Over time, the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers is narrowing.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Over time, pupils' attendance has been very low. The number of pupils who have been absent for significant amounts of time has been very high. This is the case for all pupil groups. As a result of the school's work to improve attendance, pupils now show more commitment to attending each day, and overall attendance is beginning to improve. However, this is very recent and it is too soon to see if the improvements are sustained.

In lessons, pupils usually do what is asked of them, and around the school they mostly act responsibly. Leaders have raised their expectations of pupils and many have responded positively. As a result, pupils now generally behave well and typically treat each other and staff with respect. The school supports pupils to report any bullying, and most pupils say that staff deal well with incidents such as bullying and discrimination. Staff generally know pupils well and apply the school's behaviour policies effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders at all levels have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and the curriculum. They have identified that there were too-few opportunities for pupils to write extended responses and develop their reading. Recently, the whole school has focused on becoming a 'reading and writing' school. Pupils' more recent work shows a change in the quality, complexity and volume of work. Teachers' focus on modelling excellent answers and giving precise feedback is beginning to improve what pupils know and can do. However, the information teachers receive to help them make adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is inconsistent. Additionally, teachers' skills in consistently adapting their teaching are in the early stages of development.

The school identifies pupils who do not read fluently enough to access the curriculum. Leaders prioritise reading for these pupils and provide appropriate support to help them develop fluency and read more widely. The school has developed a new library as a warm and interesting space for pupils to read, and those who are behind in reading are beginning to catch up.

The school's curriculum is generally well sequenced. Leaders have made recent improvements so that all pupils can study the full national curriculum.

As all of these improvements are recent, it is too soon to see their impact on pupils' achievement.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

The school has implemented new systems to identify pupils who have barriers to their learning or taking part in school life. It has reviewed how it uses extra funding to support pupils. The school is also focusing more keenly on getting to know pupils before they arrive at school, working with other schools and wider agencies. A dedicated team of staff meet weekly to discuss key pupils and review their progress and provision.

As a result, the school now has a more detailed view of pupils' needs. Leaders share pertinent information with teachers. Through effective training, teachers are beginning to use this information to help ensure pupils make better progress. However, this work is quite new. The review of the impact of steps taken to support pupils sometimes lacks detail. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that, sometimes, teachers cannot make the specific adaptations particular pupils need. Therefore, while improving, the longer-term impact of the school's work in this area cannot yet be seen.

The school uses alternative provision appropriately in line with pupils' particular needs.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

In the recent past, those responsible for governance have not taken effective action to secure improvement. While the support the school needs is now in place, this has not happened as swiftly as it might.

Recently, trust members have strengthened capacity through the recruitment of new trustees with relevant expertise. Trustees have appointed a new headteacher and an interim chief executive officer. They have improved how they hold leaders to account and the support they give. They now evaluate the school's improvement more regularly to gain an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

School leaders are now able to act more swiftly to improve the school. They demonstrate a clear determination to make decisions in pupils' best interests. However, improvements in leadership and governance are recent and it is not yet possible to see the impact.

Leaders engage with parents and the local community. Many stakeholders feel that the school and its communication with parents have improved. However, many still feel that engagement is limited. Additionally, a series of turbulent events have eroded many parents' relationship with the school.

Leaders have put in place a programme of professional learning. This is not yet as targeted as it needs to be. Sometimes, teachers do not have the time to embed their professional learning. Staff have mixed views about how well leaders support them to manage their

workload. The majority of staff are proud to work at the school and feel that leaders support them effectively to manage pupils' behaviour.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention ●

The school has a well-planned curriculum for personal development. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe both online and offline and how to maintain healthy lifestyles. They learn about religion, belief, culture and heritage and develop their understanding of British values. Pupils value their relationships and sex education lessons, and over time they gain important knowledge to help them prepare for life after school.

All pupils have access to a wide range of enrichment activities outside of lessons, and many pupils take part. Leaders track pupils' participation and target activities to encourage those who may be less likely to engage. Disadvantaged pupils take part in these activities in increasing numbers. The programme contributes positively to pupils' cultural awareness and enriches their wider experiences.

Access to arts education is of particular note. The school has a thriving programme of shows at various times of the year, which pupils value.

The school gives pupils the support they need to consider their next steps, including access to independent careers advice.

Staff care about pupils and provide support for them. Many pupils feel that they get the pastoral support they need, and many parents feel that the school's support for their child's wellbeing is excellent. However, too many pupils do not feel confident enough to ask for pastoral help if they have a problem.

Post 16 provision

Needs attention ●

As a result of a lack of certainty as to whether the post-16 provision will remain open, some students feel that their experience has been poor. There are no pupils in the current Year 12 and there has been some turbulence in staffing. Additionally, achievement for sixth-form students has been consistently weak for some time as a result of weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum.

Leaders understand the quality and suitability of the post-16 provision. They have worked effectively to minimise the impact of the turbulence on students. They have recently improved the quality of teaching in the sixth form.

The school generally cares well for post-16 students and ensures that they have a full study programme with a range of experiences that prepare them for life after school. This includes visits to Parliament, visits abroad, course-related speakers and a range of work to develop students personally.

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

Nether Stowe Academy is a school that is improving. However, these improvements are recent. Many pupils have had a range of negative experiences in the recent past. These have included school closures for a range of reasons, some changes in staff and unkindness between pupils. Some pupils lack confidence in the school.

The majority of pupils feel safe and enjoy their time at Nether Stowe, building good relationships with staff. However, some pupils do not feel confident in asking for help if they need it, and a significant minority of pupils do not enjoy school. Leaders deal better with bullying than they did in the past, and pupils are reporting issues more often so the school can help them.

Leaders have recently raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour. For example, they have introduced new ways of making sure that the day starts and ends calmly. It is taking some time for pupils to understand and become used to these new expectations. However, pupils are responding positively. They move around the school calmly and are proud to behave well in their lessons. Generally, they have a positive attitude to learning. The school prepares pupils well for their life after school. Many pupils take part in the wide range of interesting activities that the school offers.

Over time, pupils have not attended school well enough and their achievement has been very weak. This is starting to change. Pupils' attendance is improving. Staff are becoming more skilled in breaking down barriers to pupils' learning. Pupils are beginning to achieve better. Disadvantaged pupils are also achieving better than they have in the past.

Students in the sixth form do not achieve as well as they need to. However, they appreciate the care their teachers take in supporting them to learn, develop and take their next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to improve the quality of teaching across all key stages so that pupils achieve well. They should ensure that professional learning is sharply focused on identified weaknesses in practice and evaluated rigorously so that it leads to clear improvements in teaching and outcomes, including for post-16 students.
- Leaders should strengthen the support for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other vulnerabilities. This should include improving the precision with which pupils' plans are reviewed and evaluated and developing the confidence of the small minority of pupils who do not feel able to seek help when they need it.
- Leaders should continue to improve pupils' attendance so that they are able to benefit fully from the school's provision.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that their systems enable improvement. This includes strengthening communication and engagement with parents,

addressing staff workload more effectively, and ensuring that resources required to improve the school are provided swiftly.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the acting chief executive officer (CEO), Lee Miller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Heather Morris.

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 trustees, the CEO of the trust, members of the executive team, school leaders and school staff 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 school makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

Since the last inspection, the school has consulted on the closure of its sixth-form provision. It has not admitted any students into the current Year 12 cohort.

Headteacher: Kirsty Jones

Lead inspector:

Dan Owen, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sukhbir Farar, Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Wells, Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Washbourne, His Majesty's 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 17 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

786

Below 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

944

Below 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)

36.49%

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

1.78%

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

9.54%

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)

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)	23.6%	45.4%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	29.7%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	24.8%	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)	38.7	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	38.5	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	40.4	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)	-0.70	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.65	-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)	12.5%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	6.9%	25.2%	Below

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)	34.0	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.3	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	26.4	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)	-0.83	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-1.66	-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)	12.5%	53.1%	-40.6 pp
2022/23 (final)	6.9%	52.4%	-45.5 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)	34.0	50.4	-16.4
2023/24 (final)	30.3	50.0	-19.7
2022/23 (final)	26.4	50.3	-23.9

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)	-0.83	0.16	-1.00
2022/23 (final)	-1.66	0.17	-1.83

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)	86%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	89%	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)	27.40	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	28.45	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	26.90	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)	-0.3	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average

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)	12.1%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.0%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	11.3%	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)	33.4%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	33.7%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	35.7%	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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