

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Prince William School

Herne Road, Oundle, Northamptonshire PE8 4BS

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 April 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Anna Hewes. This school is part of East Midlands 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), Joshua Coleman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kevin Crompton.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this inclusive and nurturing school. Staff share a belief that pupils can achieve excellent outcomes, whatever their starting point. The school has the highest expectations of every pupil. Pupils succeed because they understand and live out these expectations. Pupils are happy and enjoy attending this school. They feel safe. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about school life. They are highly motivated to learn.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Clear routines and boundaries teach pupils to be responsible. As a result, pupils concentrate on their learning and take pride in their work. Pupils' relationships with each other and adults are strong and caring. They treat one another with high levels of respect and courtesy.

The positive culture that has been created in school is reinforced further by the variety of enrichment and extra-curricular activities available. Pupils play a variety of sports, attend cadets and 'Dungeons and Dragons' club and take part in school performances, such as 'Oliver'. Enterprise projects help pupils learn about future employment. Most parents and carers value the work that the school does to support their children, a typical comment being: 'I am happy with this school and feel my son is happy and doing very well.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's ambition is to ensure that each pupil receives a high-quality education. There

is a sharp focus on high standards and improvement throughout all aspects of the school's provision. The curriculum is broad, aspirational and ambitious. As a result, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve very well.

Pupils learn a carefully designed curriculum. The school is very clear about what pupils should learn and remember at each stage, including in the sixth form. Pupils regularly revisit what they have learned. This helps them to retain important knowledge and make connections between previous and current learning. Pupils and sixth-form students benefit from appropriately challenging work. Staff are experts in the subjects that they teach. They check what pupils know. Across the curriculum, staff are skilled at identifying gaps in pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils receive high-quality extra support that helps them to improve. Staff deliberately develop pupils' vocabulary. This enables pupils to discuss what they have learned with confidence and credibility.

The school promotes reading across the curriculum. Pupils who require further practice receive regular support. This helps them to become fluent readers. The library is a hive of activity for pupils. Staff share their own book choices and inspire a love of reading.

The support for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. The school identifies pupils with SEND promptly and accurately. Staff receive regular training to support pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils with SEND access the full curriculum and make good progress.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. In lessons, pupils focus on their learning because there is no disruption. Social times are calm and orderly. The school works closely with families to reduce any barriers that may impact pupils' attendance and punctuality. As a result, many more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, now attend regularly and benefit from the high-quality education at the school.

The broad personal development offer at Prince William is exceptional. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is planned in detail. It builds pupils' and sixth-form students' knowledge effectively over time. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a detailed understanding of healthy relationships and fundamental British values. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Staff instruct pupils on the importance of challenging prejudice and discrimination. Pupils are quick to identify and report any such behaviour. This helps to make the school an inclusive place. Pupils' character is developed through a wide array of leadership and extra-curricular opportunities. Sixth-form students support younger pupils as reading buddies and mentors.

The careers programme is implemented rigorously. Pupils are well supported with very effective advice and guidance that enables them to make informed decisions about their career or education. They have the opportunity to attend a careers fair, participate in work experience and learn about different qualification pathways. Sixth-form students comment very positively about the support that they receive.

The school is supported well at all levels, including by governors. The trust provides well-focused support to help the school achieve its ambitious aims. Staff report a range of

steps that the school has taken to support them with managing their workload. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium](#)

[funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142063
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10366951
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,358
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	187
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kevin Crompton
CEO of the trust	Joshua Coleman
Headteacher	Anna Hewes
Website	www.pws.emat.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up their post in September 2024.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic

began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with leaders responsible for behaviour, attendance, reading and personal development. Inspectors also held discussions with school curriculum leaders.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime.
- The lead inspector took account of the responses to the Ofsted online surveys for staff, pupils and parents.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, the chair of the trust board, representatives of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body, including the chair.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Barton	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Wilkinson	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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