

Sprowston Community Academy

Address: Cannerby Lane, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk, NR7 8NE

Unique reference number (URN): 144359

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 

At all key stages, pupils typically demonstrate a secure knowledge of what they have learned across the curriculum. Pupils who receive additional support for reading make effective progress in reading fluency. Generally, pupils secure the basic knowledge of literacy and numeracy that they need to achieve well at key stage 4 and beyond.

Pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 4, including for disadvantaged pupils in most subject areas, is broadly in line with national averages and generally improving over time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make appropriate progress from their differing starting points.

Pupils' achievement in post-16 vocational courses is well above the national average, while achievement on A-level courses is below the national average. However, A-level achievement should be viewed in the context of small cohorts of pupils and sixth-form entry requirements that enable pupils with GCSE grades 4 and 5 to enrol on A-level courses.

Pupils are generally well prepared for their next steps in education, employment and training. Pupils benefit in this regard from the school's high aspirations for them and from the careers education and guidance that they receive.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders demonstrate a clear and increasingly strategic approach to attendance. Leaders identify pupils with barriers to regular attendance and work with pupils, families and external agencies to remove those barriers. Leaders show a commitment to supporting pupils most at risk of absence. They provide in-school provision, such as the 'Quiet School', as a means of supporting pupils with anxiety to return to school. Despite overall attendance being below the national average, there is sustained improvement in attendance over time. Persistent absence is falling. Leaders' actions are having a positive impact on the attendance of pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, attendance remains a high priority for the school.

The school focuses on its shared values to guide pupils' behaviour and provides pupils with the support that they need to meet the school's high expectations. Pupils with SEND receive appropriate guidance to support their behaviour. Pupils typically behave well. They form supportive relationships with staff and benefit from clear routines and consistent application by staff of the school's expectations. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive, and many pupils contribute actively in lessons. Bullying, discrimination and harassment are rare. When such behaviour does happen, the school deals with it effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a coherent approach to curriculum and teaching that supports an increasing consistency in the quality of pupils' learning. The curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced, helping pupils to build knowledge consistently over time. Staff use assessment

systems effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and inform targeted support to address those gaps.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on literacy, particularly reading fluency and vocabulary development. Pupils who need additional help in securing basic literacy skills typically receive effective support. This support helps pupils to become confident and fluent readers. However, basic errors in some pupils' spelling and handwriting persist. Therefore, they struggle to record their thoughts and ideas as well as they should.

Teachers use resources effectively to support pupils' learning and engage pupils in lesson activities. Teachers structure lessons in a consistent way, using starter activities and mini-whiteboards to check pupils' understanding. Teachers also revisit what pupils have learned before. Generally, this helps pupils to build a coherent body of knowledge. Also, teachers make increasing use of information about pupils' needs to adapt their teaching to address barriers to pupils' learning. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. Occasionally, however, teachers' questioning does not probe deeply enough to address pupils' misconceptions.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders demonstrate a cohesive and well-considered approach to identifying and meeting pupils' needs. The school works with external agencies to inform and provide the additional support that some pupils need. Pupils with additional needs are well known to staff. Staff generally provide support that is closely matched to pupils' needs. Leaders thoughtfully design bespoke strategies for pupils, particularly around attendance, to re-engage pupils in school.

Leaders translate the school's research-informed pupil premium strategy into practical guidance for staff. This means that staff support disadvantaged pupils well. Leaders use funding effectively to remove barriers both to pupils' academic achievement and wider participation in school life. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from fully-funded curriculum trips and financial support for enrichment activities.

Leaders have established appropriate and well-staffed provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Individual pupil 'passports' give teachers the information they require to meet pupils' needs. Pupils access additional targeted support, including literacy and numeracy work and therapeutic programmes.

The school provides personalised and effective support for pupils known to social care, including looked after children. There is a clear emphasis on pupils' academic and social development. The school works well with external agencies to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of pupils.

The school makes well-considered use of alternative provision. It ensures that the use of alternative provision meets the needs and curriculum interests of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders demonstrate a knowledgeable and strategic approach to school improvement. They prioritise pupils' best interests when making decisions about school provision. Leaders show a strong understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. Leaders at all levels contribute to school improvement, adapting improvement strategies to ensure they achieve the desired changes.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on staff wellbeing and workload, contributing to high levels of staff morale and a positive working culture. Staff feel respected, valued and supported. They have a shared identity and pride in the school. Professional learning is a feature of the school's dedication to improvement. Leaders have established a structured and appropriate programme of staff development. This includes coaching, curriculum development and targeted training based on school priorities.

Engagement with parents and carers and the wider community is positive. Many parents recognise the school's inclusive ethos and supportive environment. Parents particularly value the care shown to pupils and the range of enrichment opportunities available. Leaders also foster positive community links and establish effective multi-agency partnerships. These partnerships particularly ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-coordinated support, as and when it is needed.

Trustees meet their statutory duties. Supported by local governors, trustees provide the school with appropriate levels of support and challenge. Trustees exercise clear oversight of school improvement priorities and the impact of leaders' actions. The majority of stakeholders, from pupils through to trustees, share a united commitment to what they term 'Team Sprowston', reflecting their respective roles in the school's continuous improvement.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise and promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing through the school's culture and curriculum. The school provides pupils with a broad and inclusive enrichment offer. Pupils enjoy opportunities to engage in sport, arts, debating and coding. Inclusive events, such as the school's 'Pride March', promote belonging and reflect the school's commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils. Clubs encourage more than just participation, as they help to develop pupils' confidence, resilience and leadership.

Leaders widen access to extra-curricular activities by removing financial barriers for disadvantaged pupils and by placing activities within the school day. As a result, pupils generally take part in extra-curricular activities. However, disadvantaged pupils and those with education, health and care plans do not participate as frequently as other pupils.

The school's personal, social and health education programme supports pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils learn about relationships, citizenship and wider societal issues, including online and offline risks, in an age-appropriate way. Pupils develop communication and critical thinking skills. They demonstrate a growing understanding of diversity, respect and the fundamental British values.

Pastoral care is highly effective. Staff respect and champion pupils. Pupils trust staff and value the support that they receive, including support from their heads of year. Staff listen to pupils' views about school. Indeed, pupils' views contribute to the continuous improvement of the school.

Pupils are well prepared for future pathways into education, training and employment. They receive appropriate careers education, advice and guidance. The curriculum supports readiness for employment, participation in society and independent living. Pupils also benefit from a range of leadership opportunities that are informed by the school's moral, academic and community virtues. For example, sixth-form students mentor younger pupils and lead extra-curricular clubs.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders demonstrate a clear and reflective approach to developing the sixth form. They focus on raising students' attainment and aspirations. Leaders ensure that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access sixth-form courses and achieve.

The curriculum is generally well structured and supports progression in students' learning. Teaching is purposeful, enabling students to develop independent study habits and effective revision strategies. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and address misconceptions effectively, contributing to a calm and productive learning environment. Students' work demonstrates a growing depth of understanding and academic maturity.

Students are well prepared for their next steps as a result of effective pastoral support and appropriate careers guidance. Students speak confidently about their aspirations and are well informed about pathways into higher education, apprenticeships and employment. Opportunities such as university visits and tailored advice raise students' ambitions and help them to make informed choices. Trusting relationships between staff and students underpin sixth-form provision, ensuring that individuals feel safe, supported and valued.

Wider enrichment opportunities are plentiful in the sixth form. Students have the chance to develop practical life skills such as financial awareness, while also extending their experiences beyond the classroom. Students contribute positively to the wider school community through mentoring, fundraising and various leadership roles. Indeed, students take pride in acting as role models for younger pupils.

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

Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging in this inclusive and supportive school community. Pupils build positive relationships with staff and peers, which helps pupils feel valued and confident in their learning environment. Pupils participate widely in enrichment activities, including clubs, leadership opportunities and whole-school events. Participation in these activities strengthens pupils' engagement and sense of identity within the school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils are well cared for. The school offers provision such as 'The Bridge' and 'Quiet School', which

provide thoughtful support for pupils' integration into school life and support the attendance of some pupils with barriers to regular attendance. Pupils' attendance is improving.

Pupils typically achieve well from their starting points, supported by a positive culture for learning. Pupils engage attentively in lessons, especially where teachers have established clear routines and structure learning well. Teaching generally helps pupils to recall and apply key knowledge securely. Pupils benefit from strong reading provision and a wide curriculum that prepares them effectively for next steps, including further study and careers.

Pupils learn in a safe, orderly environment where behaviour is calm and expectations are clear. Pupils report that they feel safe and trust staff to respond effectively to concerns, including about bullying. Pupils benefit from secure safeguarding systems and attentive pastoral care, helping them to feel well supported. This continues into the sixth form, where students receive the pastoral support and guidance that they need.

Pupils develop socially and personally during their time at school. Many pupils grow in confidence and resilience. Leaders listen to pupils' views, which contribute meaningfully to school life. Pupils feel very much part of 'Team Sprowston' and are proud to wear the school uniform.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they sustain and accelerate improvements in pupils' attendance, so that more pupils benefit fully from the education that the school provides and achieve well.
- Leaders should ensure that sixth-form students who select A-level courses have the prior knowledge and attitudes to learning that will enable them to achieve well.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Broad Horizons Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Owen Jenkins, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Chris Snudden.

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 headteacher, members of the school leadership team, the CEO of the trust, the chair of the board of trustees and the chair of the local governing body 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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of one registered and 16 unregistered alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Liz Wood

Lead inspector:

Louise Cooper, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jessica Pearce, Ofsted Inspector

Victoria Colgate, Ofsted Inspector

Dave Gibson, His Majesty's Inspector

Teri-Leigh Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Ross Marks, 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 6 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,739

Well above 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

1,767

Well 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)

22.12%

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

4.77%

Above 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

18.06%

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

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)

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)	45.2%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.4%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.6%	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 (final)	45.0	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.7	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.8	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)	-0.39	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.32	-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)	22.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	16.9%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	24.6%	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)	29.6	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.1	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	30.8	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)	-1.09	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.72	-0.57	Close to average

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)	22.0%	53.1%	-31.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	16.9%	53.1%	-36.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	24.6%	52.4%	-27.9 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)	29.6	50.4	-20.8
2023/24 (final)	29.1	50.0	-20.9

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	30.8	50.3	-19.5

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)	-1.09	0.16	-1.25
2022/23 (final)	-0.72	0.17	-0.88

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)	90%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	91%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	98%	94%	Above

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)	26.67	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	22.80	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	25.02	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)	-0.3	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 (3 term)	11.3%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.6%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.1%	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 (3 term)	28.4%	23.4%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	34.3%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	33.4%	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.

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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