

# Halesbury School

Address: Feldon Lane, Halesowen, West Midlands, B62 9DR

Unique reference number (URN): 103881

## Inspection report: 10 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.

## **Strong standard** ●

### **Attendance and behaviour**

**Strong standard** ●

Leaders take a supportive approach to attendance difficulties. They state that it is important to 'embrace the whole family' in order to improve attendance. Those pupils who can do so attend school regularly. Leaders regularly meet to discuss pupils at risk of repeated absence and devise effective strategies to improve rates of attendance. Consequently, pupils attend very well in school, considering their needs.

The school uses a positive and preventative approach to manage pupils' behaviour. Routines are consistent. There is a clear set of rewards and consequences that are bespoke to different groups of pupils and their needs. Staff know pupils particularly well and anticipate what makes them feel anxious. The consistency of approach enables pupils to be comfortable and develop a love of learning. Leaders ensure that staff are well supported in managing pupils' behaviour. When necessary, they make effective use of skilled professionals to support staff. Leaders regularly track behaviour records to identify trends. This enables leaders to address any issues with behaviour promptly. The school's 'kindness approach' ensures that bullying is extremely rare here. Because of the consistency of leaders' approach, there is a uniquely calm and positive atmosphere across the school.

### **Inclusion**

**Strong standard** ●

Every child is valued at this school. Staff get to know pupils' needs in detail. They use this information to ensure that pupils receive the right support. Staff use pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans effectively to understand individual needs and put appropriate support in place. As a result, pupils' needs are effectively met from the start. Leaders support children known to social care effectively through clear oversight and regular review of personal education plans. These plans closely align with pupils' EHC plans. This ensures that the support provided is cohesive, effective and barriers to learning are removed.

Leaders ensure that staff carefully track the impact of the support put in place for pupils. They make sure that pupils secure important knowledge and skills before moving on to further learning. Speech and language therapists and occupational therapists work closely with staff to shape teaching. This complements the targeted support pupils receive. Staff use tools such as symbol boards and signing with confidence. These help pupils to communicate choices and participate fully in learning.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils wisely. This ensures that challenges in relation to disadvantaged pupils are quickly addressed.

### **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Strong standard** ●

Personal development and preparing pupils for life beyond their time in Halesbury is the hallmark of this school. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum provides the foundations for the personal development programme. Lessons are personalised to the specific needs of the pupils. This maximises the impact of the school's offer. The school's relationships, sex and health curriculum complements this well. It supports pupils to

understand the importance of healthy relationships, among other topics. This supports pupils very well for later adulthood. Nevertheless, leaders ensure that staff are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils, and their families, so that there is an inclusive offer for all.

The school helps pupils to develop as citizens of the future through developing their understanding of the fundamental British values. For example, pupils speak enthusiastically about how they welcome and support peers and visitors, who are different to them. This exemplifies the school's work on developing respect for others. Key aspects of the school's work are to develop pupils' social communication, interaction and self-regulation. Staff provide pupils with regular opportunities to reflect on how they are feeling. This enables them to understand and control their emotions.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of wider opportunities to develop their talents and interests. To do this, leaders establish effective links with community organisations, such as local professional football clubs and theatre groups. Trips and visitors into school are very well considered. For example, trips to local museums and animal parks provoke pupils' interest in learning.

The school actively encourages pupils to spend time in the local community through sporting tournaments, work-based placements and enterprise initiatives. The latter two are central to the effective school's careers programme. This prepares pupils very well for life beyond the school gate.

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## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils make positive progress through the curriculum from their starting points. This is because staff personalise learning to meet pupils' individual needs. Pupils make progress in relation to their education, health and care (EHC) plan. Targets set in these are a focus for all staff. Pupils secure their learning well over time because they get plenty of opportunities to practise and secure what they have learned in a wide range of situations. This enables them to be well prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils learn to communicate effectively. They master their skills well using the right method that they need to communicate effectively. Consequently, they are able to communicate their needs and ideas.

Older pupils work towards vocational qualifications and show independence when engaging in practical tasks. Post-16 students succeed in functional skills and vocational courses, applying learning in real-life contexts.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and ambitious. There are 3 teaching pathways; 'experience for life, choices for life and independence for life'. These pathways ensure that pupils get the right support for them to be able to learn. Leaders accurately understand the

quality of the curriculum and teaching. Staff know the communication needs of pupils and carefully model well-chosen vocabulary to help them understand. Consequently, staff adapt and tailor learning so that pupils learn well. 'Learning ladders' in each subject identify the manageable steps in learning that are necessary to make progress in each subject. They logically order key knowledge and skills. This helps to prepare pupils for their next stage of learning. While staff typically deliver the curriculum as intended, occasionally, the focus on the identified manageable steps in learning is not consistent. This limits some pupils' learning across the curriculum.

The school's phonics programme is well considered and delivered. Pupils learn well in phonics. Many recognise letter sounds and use them to read words and sentences. In mathematics, staff make sure that pupils build on important foundations for learning and secure these over time. However, the writing curriculum does not build important foundations for learning as logically as it could. This impacts on pupils' ability to build important writing skills.

## Early years

Expected standard 

Children make a positive start in the early years. This is because leaders ensure that parents, carers and professionals play an active role from before the time that they start school. Staff establish positive relationships with children early. This enables support to be well matched to children's needs. The early years curriculum engages children well. It places a clear emphasis on the importance of securing children's basic skills to support their future learning. Staff typically deliver the curriculum as intended. They know the importance of high-quality interactions and use these to secure learning over time.

Staff use songs and rhymes to engage children in learning. Staff make sure that they spend time identifying the most suitable type of communication for each child to use. Often, this starts with repeating actions and sounds that children make themselves. As a result, children learn to express their needs and feelings in readiness for Year 1. Staff model language well, they provide children with commentary during learning activities. This develops children's understanding of language.

Parents and carers are well informed about their child's progress. Staff maintain two-way communication through the use of online systems. This is particularly useful as many children travel to and from school in taxis.

## Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and those responsible for governance are passionate and ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They provide calm and steady leadership. Leaders are visible around the school, enabling them to gain an accurate understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve.

Leaders keep pupils' needs central to their decisions. For example, they have adapted quickly to the changing needs of pupils who attend the school. They maintain a clear focus on securing the best outcomes for all pupils.

Staff benefit from well-focused professional learning. This is informed by school improvement priorities and high-quality research. A particular strength is the support provided by the therapy team, who help staff to understand and respond to pupils' immediate needs.

Leaders engage well with staff. Staff are typically positive about the support they receive from leaders. They feel that leaders have implemented change sensitively and are considerate of their workload and wellbeing.

The governing body carries out its role diligently. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They act in the best interests of pupils. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. They are typically well informed. However, sometimes the oversight of the school's work is not as robust as it could be. Leaders are aware of this and are supporting governors by providing clear structures to enable them to more closely focus on their specific roles. However, this is still to have its full impact.

The school works closely with families and external partners to strengthen transition and maintain continuity of care. Parents and carers appreciate the support and care the school provides for pupils.

## Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a post-16 curriculum that is ambitious and adapted to students' needs. Leaders have researched and adopted new study programmes to make sure that the curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of students. These programmes combine functional skills and vocational qualifications. Leaders ensure that staff deliver these programmes typically well. Students get opportunities to connect their learning through lessons, as well as wider opportunities, such as horticulture, bike maintenance and work on a farm. This enables students to secure important knowledge over time.

The school uses students' voices to shape their goals for later life. Skilled staff provide structured, pre-formal and semi-formal careers guidance. Students' voices and aspirations, as well as the views of parents and carers, contribute to this. Careers education meets statutory requirements. Students have regular encounters with employers, often in the local community. Students also have opportunities to visit specialist colleges throughout the year. As a result, students get the knowledge and confidence they need for their next steps in life. Leaders' work on preparation for adulthood further secures this.

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

Halesbury School is an oasis of calm. Clear routines and expectations from the start help to ensure that pupils settle quickly into every school day. Staff know the pupils very well. They build positive relationships with pupils, parents and carers to gain a full picture of each pupils' needs. This is important because of the increasing number of pupils with more complex needs who attend the school. Leaders foster positive relationships with parents. Parents appreciate this. One comment was typical of many when they stated, 'The staff truly "get" the needs of children and treat every child with respect, patience and understanding.'

Pupils feel safe at this school. This is because leaders make sure that all staff understand the specific vulnerabilities of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who attend. Pupils behave very well because staff manage routines and behaviour consistently. Leaders are robust in ensuring that pupils attend as well as possible. They provide effective support to families to improve the attendance of pupils who need to.

Leaders aspire for the very best for pupils, both educationally as well as personally and socially. The school lives out its vision of 'achieve, believe and challenge'. Pupils engage well in and enjoy learning because staff appropriately challenge them. At the heart of this is leaders' work to ensure that every pupil learns to communicate effectively. Staff ensure that pupils use the form of communication that suits them best. Whether this is through gesture, objects, pictures or signing.

Leaders focus on preparing all pupils as well as possible for later life. This work starts in early years, where children regularly visit the local community. From Year 7 all pupils take part in regular activity in the community, such as selling 'jarkits' at a local market.

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## **Next steps**

- Leaders should further support staff to ensure that all curriculum subjects are delivered consistently well across the school.
  - Leaders should refine the school's writing curriculum so as there is a more logical sequence to the delivery of important skills and knowledge.
  - The governing body should strengthen its oversight of the school's work so that it consistently and robustly supports school improvement.
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## **About this inspection**

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Jayne Wright.

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, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and other leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses no alternative provision.

The school caters for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, speech language and communication needs and severe learning difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

Headteacher: Amanda Appleby Payne

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**Lead inspector:**

Barry Yeadsley, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**

Pamela Matty, Ofsted Inspector

Wayne Simner, Ofsted Inspector

David Lisowski, 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 10 March 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**174**

### 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.

### School capacity

**117**

### 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.

## **Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**42.77%**

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

## **Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

**100.00%**

### **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.

## **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**0.00%**

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

## **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).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

**SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, VI - Visual Impairment, HI - Hearing Impairment, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health, MSI - Multi-Sensory Impairment, PD - Physical Disability, SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty**

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

## **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).

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>
<b>2023 leavers (provisional)</b>	83%
<b>2022 leavers (revised)</b>	93%
<b>2021 leavers (revised)</b>	100%

## **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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>
<b>2024/25 (2 term)</b>	10.1%
<b>2023/24 (3 term)</b>	10.1%
<b>2022/23 (3 term)</b>	12.0%

### **Persistent absence**

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school
2024/25 (2 term)	34.6%
2023/24 (3 term)	32.9%
2022/23 (3 term)	38.7%

## 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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