

Noel-Baker Academy

Address: Bracknell Drive, Alvaston, Derby, Derbyshire, DE24 0BR

Unique reference number (URN): 143853

Inspection report: 30 June 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

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have created an inclusive culture at this school where pupils are well known as individuals. Leaders accurately and swiftly identify any barriers to learning or wellbeing that pupils may have. This includes close working with families and external professionals.

Leaders ensure that education, health and care plans accurately reflect pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's own SEND documentation mirrors these plans well with precise targets. Leaders provide professional learning, so staff develop their expertise in meeting pupils' SEND needs. As a result, typically, the support planned for pupils with SEND increasingly helps them access learning effectively.

Leaders use a wide range of approaches to support disadvantaged pupils. Some of this work is having a positive impact. For example, reading support and bespoke tutoring have helped disadvantaged pupils close gaps in their reading. Leaders regularly review the difference this work is making so that provision continues to improve pupils' engagement, attendance and achievement.

Leaders provide effective support for pupils who are known, or previously known, to social care. They work closely with relevant professionals to ensure support is regularly reviewed and refined.

Alternative provision is used appropriately and only where it meets pupils' individual needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Significant changes in leadership have reshaped the direction and pace of improvement across the school. New senior and middle leaders, alongside trust leaders, have acted quickly to reset expectations, strengthen systems and improve the quality of education. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that still need attention. They have identified clear priorities that are firmly rooted in the best interests of pupils and are implementing these with urgency. As a result, important improvements are beginning to take hold across behaviour, teaching, attendance and pupil outcomes, even though some aspects of provision remain at an early stage.

Those responsible for governance meet their statutory duties and provide appropriate challenge and support. Governors understand the school's context well, including the impact of recent leadership changes, and monitor leaders' actions with a clear focus on safeguarding, inclusion and improving outcomes for pupils.

Leaders are mindful of staff wellbeing and workload. Staff say that recent changes have helped reduce unnecessary workload and that leaders respond appropriately when concerns are raised. Professional learning is purposeful and aligned to school priorities. Staff value the training, coaching and modelling they receive.

Parental, professional and community engagement is improving. Leaders communicate more openly with families and work closely with external agencies to support pupils'

wellbeing, attendance and safety. Strengthened partnerships with professionals are helping leaders address barriers faced by vulnerable pupils and improve the consistency of support.

Although some areas of the school still require attention, leaders' decisive actions and strengthened capacity are driving improvement at pace.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have reshaped the school's culture so that personal development and wellbeing are central to pupils' experience. Leaders monitor this work closely and ensure it is improving pupils' experiences and readiness for life beyond school.

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive and well-sequenced personal development offer. They learn about healthy relationships, consent, mental health and how to stay safe both online and offline. They develop important life skills, including decision-making, financial awareness and understanding local risks. Pupils speak confidently about respect, tolerance and inclusion. Activities such as Culture Day, Pride events and sports day help them understand and value diversity. Pupils also learn about different faiths and worldviews, which strengthens their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders ensure pupils understand fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect.

Pupil leadership is well established. The active school council and pupil parliament give pupils meaningful opportunities to influence school life, shaping events and contributing to discussions about equality, safety and wellbeing. Pupils recognise that their voice is listened to and acted upon.

Enrichment is inclusive and purposeful. Pupils access a wide range of clubs and activities, and leaders track participation carefully to ensure all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit. Trips and cultural experiences broaden pupils' horizons and deepen curriculum learning.

Pastoral care is a significant strength. Pupils trust staff and say they feel safe. Breakfast club provides a calm, supportive start to the day, and targeted wellbeing provision helps pupils manage challenges. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, and pupils with SEND receive tailored support that helps them navigate key transition points.

Careers education is well established. Clear guidance and employer encounters mean pupils are increasingly well prepared for their next steps. Leaders' strengthened careers work has contributed to a significant increase in pupils moving on to education, employment or training.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Examination results remain below national averages, and overall, pupils' progress is not yet in line with their peers nationally. Outcomes vary across subjects and pupil groups. Pupils with low prior attainment achieve relatively well. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils remains variable. While gaps with national figures have narrowed in some measures, they have widened in others.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically receive helpful support, but inconsistencies in teaching mean their progress varies. Many pupils develop secure foundations in reading through targeted testing and intervention, helping them access the curriculum more confidently. Leaders also recognise gaps in pupils' numeracy foundations and are developing more intensive support so these pupils can catch up securely.

Leaders, supported by the trust, have strengthened the curriculum and teaching, and early signs show this work is beginning to improve pupils' achievement. Most pupils move on to appropriate next steps, although some are not as well prepared as they could be.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Attendance is not as high as it should be, and too many pupils continue to miss valuable learning time. Leaders have strengthened their systems for monitoring attendance and now act more quickly when concerns arise. They understand the barriers that some pupils face and are working closely with families and external partners to reduce these. Their actions are beginning to make a difference, and early signs show improving attendance for all pupil groups. However, overall attendance remains below where it should be.

Leaders have reset the culture for behaviour and have established clear, high expectations for how pupils should conduct themselves. Pupils understand these expectations and typically meet them. The school is now a calm and orderly place, and both pupils and staff recognise the improvements leaders have made.

Lessons are settled and purposeful, and pupils generally show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils say that behaviour has improved considerably and that disruption is now uncommon. Staff are typically effective in reinforcing expectations and maintaining a positive climate for learning.

Leaders provide helpful support to pupils who need additional help in managing their behaviour. Incidents of bullying, discrimination or aggression are dealt with swiftly and managed well.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have strengthened the curriculum and teaching by establishing clear and consistent expectations. Their work has brought greater consistency to how learning is planned and delivered, helping to secure firmer foundations for pupils over time. The curriculum is now

more coherent and better organised, giving pupils a clearer sense of what they are learning and why. However, because teaching is not yet consistently effective, pupils' achievement does not always match the ambition of the curriculum.

Teaching is improving and staff understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who may be more vulnerable. Teachers know their subjects well. Generally, they explain new content clearly. Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning, but differences in how teachers respond to pupils' needs mean learning experiences can vary. Teachers do not always adjust their approaches or the resources pupils use, which means some pupils cannot access learning as easily or confidently as they should. Checks on pupils' learning are sometimes imprecise, so gaps and misconceptions are not always identified early enough.

Pupils benefit from well-established reading routines, targeted support and a strong focus on vocabulary, helping them understand new learning with greater confidence. Leaders know that some pupils have gaps in their numeracy foundations and are developing more intensive support so these pupils can catch up securely.

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

Pupils are warmly welcomed into school each day by staff. They experience a school that is increasingly calm, orderly and focused on helping them succeed. Pupils recognise that behaviour has improved considerably. Typically, relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Many pupils have positive attitudes to their education. While many pupils attend regularly, a notable proportion of pupils miss school too often, losing valuable learning time.

Historically, pupils have not achieved as well as they should in national examinations. Leaders are taking clear steps to strengthen the curriculum and improve the consistency of teaching, but these improvements have not yet had time to fully impact outcomes. Most pupils move on to appropriate next steps in education, employment or training. However, for some pupils, gaps in their knowledge mean they are not as well prepared for their next stage as they could be.

Generally, pupils behave well and feel safe. They recognise that incidents of bullying are uncommon and trust staff to deal with concerns quickly and fairly. Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning and want to do well. However, the quality of teaching they experience is not yet consistently effective across classes, which means pupils' learning can vary.

Staff typically understand the barriers to learning and/or wellbeing faced by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND typically receive helpful support and adaptations to support their learning needs and/or wellbeing. Pupils who find busy spaces difficult value the bespoke activities available at social times, which help them feel included and supported.

Pupils benefit from a culture that promotes tolerance, respect and inclusion. They talk confidently about the importance of treating others with respect and understand how to keep themselves safe. They enjoy opportunities such as Culture Day, enrichment clubs and

leadership roles, which help them explore their interests and feel part of the wider school community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that gaps in achievement for disadvantaged pupils close securely and consistently across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure adaptive teaching strategies are consistently embedded in classroom practice so pupils' needs are precisely met, enabling all groups to access the curriculum fully and make strong, sustained progress.
 - Leaders should ensure teachers use assessment skilfully to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, build on pupils' prior learning and give pupils opportunities to practise and improve their work.
 - Leaders should ensure attendance strategies have sustained impact, improving overall attendance and reducing persistent absence.
 - Leaders should ensure that agreed approaches to help pupils catch up and keep up following a period of absence are used consistently well, preventing pupils from developing gaps in knowledge that negatively impact achievement.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen and develop middle leaders, particularly those new in post, so they can drive improvement with confidence and precision, sustaining the current improvement trajectory.
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About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This school is part of L.E.A.D Multi-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), Diana Owen, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Buck.

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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders and representatives of the trust and local governing body. The lead inspector also met with the deputy CEO of the trust.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

There have been significant changes in leadership since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher, who started in post in September 2025.

The school makes use of 2 registered 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.

Headteacher: Paul Greenough

Lead inspector:

Anne Maingay, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Gulbanu Kader, Ofsted Inspector

Michael Wilson, Ofsted Inspector

Peter Monk, Ofsted Inspector

Marie Brooks, 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 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,243

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

1,400

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)

47.22%

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

3.54%

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

16.33%

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 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 (final)	29.7%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	23.4%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	21.0%	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)	36.3	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	35.2	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	35.8	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)	-0.84	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.56	-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)	16.3%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	15.6%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	18.8%	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)	28.7	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	30.2	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.2	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)	-1.08	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.81	-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)	16.3%	53.1%	-36.9 pp
2023/24 (final)	15.6%	53.1%	-37.5 pp
2022/23 (final)	18.8%	52.4%	-33.6 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 (final)	28.7	50.4	-21.7
2023/24 (final)	30.2	50.0	-19.8
2022/23 (final)	31.2	50.3	-19.1

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)	-1.08	0.16	-1.24
2022/23 (final)	-0.81	0.17	-0.97

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)	84%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	89%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	91%	94%	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)	11.9%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.7%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.0%	9.0%	Close to average

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)	33.3%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	35.0%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	24.3%	26.5%	Close to average

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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