

Inspection of Norton Hill Academy

Charlton Road, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Somerset BA3 4AD

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 October 2024

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Gordon Green. This school is part of Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Alun Williams, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tony Wells.

What is it like to attend this school?

The culture of the school is one of respect, understanding and kindness. Pupils and students thrive at the school. The school has high expectations for pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. As a result, they concentrate and work hard. They achieve highly, especially in the sixth form.

The school community does not tolerate behaviours that are not inclusive. Pupils and students speak up against injustice. If it should happen, pupils are confident to report incidents. They know the school will deal with them effectively.

The school has identified the character traits they want pupils to embrace. A well-established house system embeds these. This prepares pupils well for the future. There is a vast and exceptional enrichment programme. It develops many aspects of their academic learning through clubs such as the George Orwell writing club, music producers club or climbing club. These provide an array of ways for pupils to explore their interests and talents.

Pupils commit to the life of the school through the many leadership roles they take on. They influence the life of the school through their contributions and feedback. They feel the school listens and acts on this. They have a strong sense of pride in their school.

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

The school has established a thoughtfully crafted and well-sequenced curriculum. It has considered deeply what pupils learn and when. In a few subjects, there is work underway to ensure the curriculum supports the best possible outcomes for pupils. The impact of this work has yet to lead to the high outcomes seen in other parts of the curriculum.

In the sixth form, students are highly evaluative and analytical in their learning. The school has high 'sixth form expectations' to support students in their studies. The school provides students with wider reading and academic guidance for the subjects they study. As a result, students achieve highly. They are well prepared for their next steps after sixth form.

Teachers check carefully how well pupils have learned the curriculum. They use this information to manage gaps in pupils' knowledge or skills. Pupils achieve well through their learning, especially disadvantaged pupils or pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers work collaboratively with parents and pupils with SEND. They ensure their needs are identified and well planned for. In lessons, the strategies to support pupils with SEND are skilfully used. As a result, pupils with SEND perform well.

The school is careful to make sure pupils in the early stages of learning to read have the right support. It provides the precise support needed to meet their reading need. Through many strands, such as the tutor reading programme, the school embeds a strong

ambition for reading. For example, all pupils read to an adult. Sixth-form students train and take an active role in supporting younger pupils.

Attendance at school is high. This is because the school tracks attendance diligently. Pupils who might be at risk are well supported. The school has a well-established 'hub' to support pupil welfare and behaviour. Through early identification, trained staff provide intervention and guidance to pupils. Pupils really value their interactions with the 'hub'. It helps them to be successful at school. The school shares its work with others. The provision for pupils is of high quality.

Pupils are exceptionally prepared for life in modern Britain. A well-sequenced personal, social and health education curriculum develops pupils to be respectful and broad-minded. They learn about relationships and consent in an age-appropriate way. In the sixth form, students become proficient in well-considered life skills, such as finance. This prepares them well for planning to live independently. Pupils have a deep understanding of inclusivity and what it means to be different. They live this out through their behaviours and shared views.

The careers programme inspires pupils and students to make aspirational and well-informed decisions at key points in their education. Through the curriculum, pupils develop a wide knowledge of different career pathways and specialisms. They learn to present themselves confidently to future employers. Sixth-form students have a broad knowledge about higher education, apprenticeships and employment. Pupils and students have high aspirations when making decisions for the future. They follow high-level courses and training that lead to their chosen career pathways.

The school and the trust provide training that deepens staff's expertise. Staff share their successful practice across the trust. Governors have the training and knowledge to ask challenging questions. The trust supports governors to carry out the duties delegated to them. The school communicates well with parents, pupils and staff. Stakeholders feel well informed and have a very positive view of the work of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, there is work to do to ensure the curriculum delivers the same high standards as other parts of the curriculum. Outcomes for pupils in these subjects are not as high as they are elsewhere. The school should make sure these subject areas are developed in a way to achieve the same success across subjects.

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	136335
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10322241
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	1,827
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	378
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tony Wells
CEO of the trust	Alun Williams
Headteacher	Gordon Green
Website	www.nortonhillschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- 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 uses five unregistered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, design and technology and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing body and trust leaders, including the CEO. They also spoke with a trustee.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5 about their experiences of school. They observed the school during breaktimes and arrival at school and visited assemblies and tutor times.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, self-evaluation documents, minutes of trust meetings and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also viewed the responses to the online pupil survey and the responses to the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Teresa Hill	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Benjamin Antell	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Foley	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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