

Orchard Manor School

Address: The Old Rectory, Stow Bardolph, Nr King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3HT

Unique reference number (URN): 151802

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.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve highly. Many pupils have only been at the school for a short time. Highly inclusive practices and a well-considered curriculum, help pupils to secure key knowledge. Most pupils suffered traumatic experiences at their previous schools. This results in significant gaps in their learning. Teaching helps pupils to close these gaps. Pupils are beginning to draw together learning from different subjects and their own experiences. This helps pupils construct well-considered and thoughtful responses to different situations.

Pupils embed key foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils read well. Pupils learning phonics secure an excellent understanding of the sounds letters make. They progress to blending these sounds to form words and sentences.

Pupils achieve ambitious personal goals. They overcome anxiety in social situations. They present to groups of adults. Pupils learn how to create a healthy menu, shop for ingredients and cook a balanced meal. Alongside their academic achievements pupils are extremely well prepared for adulthood.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils attend well. Due to traumatic experiences, pupils have found it difficult to attend school in the past. Some have not attended school at all. Leaders work with pupils and their families to build a trust that helps pupils feel secure in school. Where appropriate, the transition process provides pupils with a programme that introduces them to school gradually. This reassures pupils. It helps them overcome their anxiety. A sense of belonging and a renewed thirst for learning provides pupils with a reason to attend school regularly. Leaders closely monitor emerging patterns and trends in attendance. They step in and provide support quickly. This helps pupils maintain high rates of attendance.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are respectful and polite. Pupils know that there are high expectations. They constantly strive to meet them. Staff model the behaviours that reflect the school's values and expectations. Pupils emulate these behaviours consistently. Unkindness of any form is extremely rare. Learning proceeds in calm classrooms without disruption. In the rare cases where pupils begin to struggle to manage their emotions, staff intervene. These interventions are swift and carried out with sensitivity. Staff help pupils re-engage before incidents escalate.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education and health care (EHC) plan for a primary need of autism. However, most pupils also have significant physical, emotional, societal or familial disadvantage. Leaders work closely with local authorities, relevant external agencies and families. This helps leaders to design an individualised provision. This means pupils' experiences centre on their individual needs, interests and aspirations.

Leaders' knowledge of pupils' individual needs is impressive. There is a forensic approach to assessing pupils' needs. Robust assessment adds layers of detail to the information from pupils' EHC plans. Leaders draw together clinical, therapeutic, behavioural and learning expertise. This provides leaders with a comprehensive understanding of pupils. Leaders recognise the specific barriers pupils face to their personal and academic progress. Leaders understand how these individual barriers interact to hinder pupils' learning. Leaders create plans that support pupils to overcome these barriers.

Leaders make sure that all staff are knowledgeable. This helps provide accurate, detailed feedback on how pupils are progressing. Leaders use this information well. Leaders adapt the curriculum where necessary. Leaders finesse strategies that support pupils. Staff knowledge is routinely updated to meet pupils' changing needs and circumstances.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

In the short time since opening, leaders have created a highly inclusive school. There is a clear vision and determination to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to thrive. Leaders have created a caring, compassionate and ambitious school. Every decision is carefully considered to maximise the experiences of pupils. This school has made a hugely positive impact on the lives of its pupils and their families.

Leaders, under the guidance of a highly effective proprietary body, provide excellence for pupils. Leaders carefully monitor the academic, therapeutic and clinical provision. Their actions ensure that these aspects interleave seamlessly. This supports pupils, many of whom have negative experiences of education, to flourish. Leaders have a forensic understanding of where further advances are needed. They have already actioned strategies to ensure the curriculum addresses the needs of all pupils.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They share the proprietor's vision to improve the lives of the most vulnerable pupils. They feel well supported by leaders. Staff value the voice they have as the school continues to grow. They embrace the informed support and professional development that improves their practice. Staff know that leaders consider their wellbeing and workload. Staff, including those in the early stages of their careers, feel well supported.

The proprietor holds leaders to account. There is robust challenge that considers the impact of leaders' actions. An experienced national network of experts provides excellent support to leaders. The proprietor consistently meets the independent school standards. This includes meeting the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equalities Act 2010.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The personal development programme is impressive. The pastoral care provided for pupils is excellent. Staff know pupils extremely well. They tailor their approaches to accommodate pupils' individual needs, anxieties, ambitions and backgrounds. Staff step in to support pupils and their families with care and compassion. Strong, positive relationships are forged. This helps pupils re-engage with school, despite poor experiences in the past.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is well designed. It provides pupils with key knowledge about life in modern Britain. Pupils develop an age-appropriate

understanding of the importance of healthy relationships. As pupils get older, they learn about consent. Fundamental British values, such as tolerance, are interwoven through the curriculum. This helps pupils understand that it is ok to be different. Pupils reflect on their own experiences of how some of them have been treated in the past. The strength of their friendships and the trust they have built with each other help them share these experiences. This provides pupils with a sense of togetherness and belonging. They learn what can happen when others are not tolerant and respectful. They also understand that the law is there to protect them, and others with defined characteristics. The careers programme supports pupils understand their future options. It helps them to begin to make informed choices.

Leaders ensure that a wide range of visits enrich pupils' learning. Trips to different places of worship supports pupils' learning about different religions. Young pupils visit a nearby Royal Park when learning about the changing of season from summer to autumn. This brings their classroom learning into full technicolour.

Pupils treasure their Friday enrichment sessions. Arts and sporting activities are enjoyed. The board games offer brings a friendly competitiveness to life in the school. Pupils thrive in leadership roles. Older pupils support primary-aged children to prepare for sports day. The school council provides pupils with a voice about their school. Pupils are extremely well prepared for adulthood and their next steps.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. They carefully consider pupils' starting points. They use this information to determine where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Teaching addresses these gaps. Teachers logically layer new knowledge on top of what pupils already know. Teachers use their expertise to clearly explain new ideas. They make adaptations to ensure that pupils' individual needs are met. Teachers check what pupils have understood. Generally, this provides teachers with an understanding of pupils' readiness to move on.

Teaching provides the majority of pupils with the knowledge they need to read well. Most pupils are taught phonics well. Teachers help pupils to become confident, fluent readers and accurate spellers. Staff help pupils develop a wide vocabulary. Teaching closes any gaps in pupils reading knowledge. The curriculum helps pupils secure a proficiency in writing. However, leaders have not defined precisely the knowledge pupils need in the earliest stages of reading and writing. This slows the progress of a small number of pupils. Despite this, pupils make excellent progress from their starting points. They secure a broad understanding of key knowledge and use this in preparation for their next steps.

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

Pupils love coming to this incredible school. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education and health care plan. Many pupils join Orchard Manor with a negative experience of education. This has led to them enduring traumatic experiences. The school has only been open for a short time. However, it is beginning to transform the lives of pupils and their families. Pupils have begun to trust adults. A deeply rooted sense of respect is prevalent throughout the school. Pupils value the strong positive relationships with staff and their peers. Pupils have been given a purpose to attend school. They do so regularly. Pupils thrive in a climate where their clinical, therapeutic and academic needs are being met.

Pupils have responded to the high aspirations leaders have for them. Teachers have smashed pupils' self-perceived ceiling of achievement. Pupils have developed a thirst for learning. As teaching provides them with new knowledge, pupils demand more. Pupils benefit from carefully crafted adaptations to teaching. These help pupils to close gaps and learn new knowledge.

Pupils flourish in ways that transcend the classroom. They develop confidence that was suppressed in the past. They take on responsibility for their school, environment and each other. Some pupils arrive with anxiety about attending school or being in public spaces. Now they sing in a local church, attend public events and confidently engage with their community. Pupils understand the importance of respecting difference. They sensitively relate to their own experiences of feeling isolated and ostracised. Everyone is accepted for who they are. Consequently, bullying or unkind behaviour is extremely rare.

Pupils enjoy an impressive enrichment offer. Pupils enjoy visits to local places of interest, including Royal Parks and Palaces. Visits to the neighbouring farm give pupils a sense of countryside life and animal care. Parents are highly complimentary about the school. They recognise the positive impact the school has had on their children's learning and personal growth.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum sets out in a logical order the precise knowledge pupils need to learn at the earliest stages of reading and writing.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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, SENCO, the CEO and regional director of the proprietary body, representatives of local authorities, staff, and parents during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their learning and what it is like to be a pupil at the school.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:
The school was registered by the DfE in July 2025. This was the school's first standard inspection.
All pupils have an educational and health care plan with a primary diagnosis of autism.
The school does not use any providers of alternative provision.

The name of the proprietary body is P Bloom Ltd.
The fees charged by the school are £67,264.
The email address of the school is info@orchardmanorschool.co.uk.

Headteacher: Paul Sanderson

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

1. Quality of education provided	Standards met
All standards have been met.	
2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	Standards met
All standards have been met.	
3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils	Standards met
All standards have been met.	
4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	Standards met
All standards have been met.	

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:
Dave Gibson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Michael Williams, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 30 June 2026

Total pupils

School capacity

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

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.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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