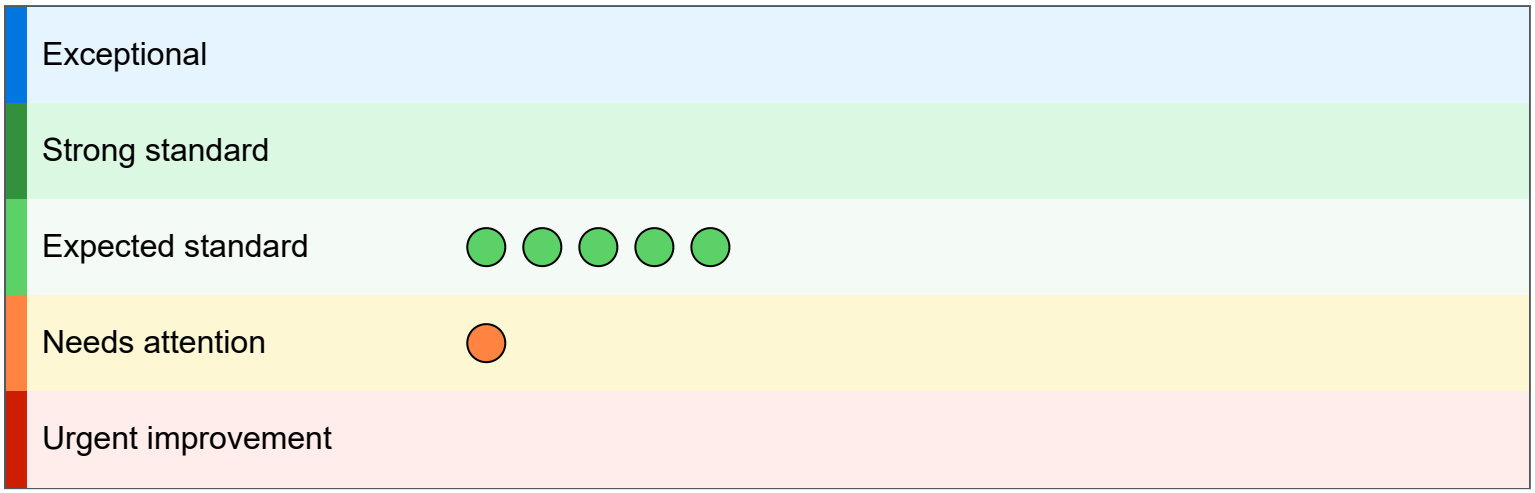
Alvaston Junior Academy

Address: Elvaston Lane, Alvaston, Derby, Derbyshire, DE24 0PU

Unique reference number (URN): 145759

Inspection report: 22 September 2026



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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' attendance. Leaders closely monitor how well pupils attend and provide appropriate support for any pupils who do not attend school as well as they should. As a result of leaders' work with pupils, families and external agencies, rates of attendance for all groups of pupils remain consistently in line with national averages.

Leaders make sure that pupils understand and respect the school's 'AJA STARS' behaviour principles. These encourage pupils to 'Speak kindly, Tell the truth, Always do your best, Respect each other' and 'Show self-control'. These principles are applied consistently by all staff. Pupils' behaviour around school, and their attitudes to learning in lessons are positive. Playtimes are generally calm and happy. Many pupils say that behaviour is good at this school, and that bullying hardly ever happens. Pupils express confidence in staff to sort out any problems that occur. Staff say that they feel effectively supported by leaders to manage any behaviour incidents. This includes supporting pupils, who sometimes struggle to control their emotions and may need extra help with challenging behaviours. Pupils in the inclusion hub receive sensitive and timely support, for example, by having time in the hub's sensory room.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders carefully tailor their 'INSPIRE' curriculum according to the pupils' needs. Leaders have ensured that the well-sequenced curriculum is established across all subjects. Since the last inspection, leaders have taken positive steps to improve teaching. The impact of leaders' actions is seen in the consistency of teaching across the school, and in teachers' secure subject knowledge. In lessons, staff regularly check pupils' understanding. This enables pupils to correct any misconceptions quickly.

Staff adapt the teaching effectively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or for those who have other barriers to learning. This enables those pupils to access the curriculum successfully.

The revised mathematics curriculum has resulted in notable improvements, both in the teaching and in pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills. Leaders' current focus on writing is helping pupils to focus on the essential knowledge that they need to become skilled writers. Leaders have introduced new approaches to the reading curriculum. These developments are having a positive impact on some aspects of reading. However, some pupils who are still in the early stages of reading are not developing as quickly as they should. Staff have not all received training in how to teach phonics. They do not consistently support pupils to apply their phonics knowledge when attempting unfamiliar words.

Inclusion

Expected standard

This is an inclusive school, where leaders and staff know their pupils well. As a result, leaders quickly identify the barriers that may affect some pupils' learning or wellbeing. Leaders have accurate oversight of key groups, such as pupils who are eligible for the pupil

premium, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and others who are disadvantaged. Leaders ensure that pupils receive appropriate support to make progress from their starting points.

The school's 'Marvellous Mammoths' inclusion hub provides effective support for pupils with SEND. Skilled and caring staff ensure that pupils follow a bespoke, well-considered curriculum. At other times, pupils from the hub have opportunities to participate meaningfully in wider school activities.

Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding wisely to address any gaps in learning and support pupils' wellbeing. Additional support is made available to help disadvantaged pupils to achieve and thrive. Leaders ensure that the school's increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language settle quickly and receive skilled support. Leaders and staff work effectively with parents and carers and specialist services. This informs the teaching and positively shapes pupils' experiences.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's context and the areas needing development. Their plans for improvement are ambitious and focused on providing all pupils with the best possible quality of education and care. Since the last inspection, leaders have focused on improving many aspects of the school. The impact of their actions is evident in the improved teaching and in the improved quality of the school's personal development programme.

Leaders work together as an effective team. Staff value leaders' visible presence around school, through which leaders model the high expectations they wish to see. Staff say that they feel well supported by leaders, for example, in managing any instances of poor behaviour that might sometimes occur.

Those responsible for governance share leaders' ambitious vision for pupils, especially those who are the most disadvantaged. The trust ensures that its legal responsibilities are fulfilled. The trust provides robust support and challenge for school leaders. There is a consideration for leaders' and staff workload and their wellbeing. Staff say that they value this support and the high-quality training that they can access.

There are renewed systems in place for forging constructive relationships with parents and carers and the local community. Parents speak positively about the changes that leaders have introduced, and their passion for the school. Leaders have successfully established a more open culture in which parents are welcome to come into school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders provide a broad and well-considered personal development programme. Leaders have successfully improved this aspect of the school's provision since the last inspection. Through regular lessons, assemblies, events and activities, pupils learn about important themes that support their broader personal development. For example, pupils learn how to be safe on roads, around water and online. Leaders ensure that pupils' physical and mental

health and wellbeing are well supported. Pupils demonstrate a confident understanding of healthy relationships, how to look after themselves and how to stay safe.

Leaders make sure that pastoral support is available for pupils who may wish to talk to a trusted adult. Pupils say that they value being able to access this kind of support for their wellbeing.

Pupils enthusiastically take on responsibilities in school. For example, they can apply to serve as school council members. These opportunities foster pupils' leadership skills and their sense of belonging to the school community. Leaders provide a wide range of activities outside lessons, to nurture pupils' talents and interests. Many of these activities take place at lunchtime, to allow for as many as possible to attend. Leaders carefully check the attendance at activities, to ensure equality of opportunity.

Pupils' cultural development is enhanced through accessing art, drama and musical activities. Links with local employers give pupils an insight into the world of work and their future lives beyond school.

Pupils have a developing awareness of the fundamental British values. They demonstrate an understanding of those characteristics that are protected by law, such as disability. Pupils are respectful in their consideration of those who are different from them, for example, in regard to race or religion. They are well prepared as informed young citizens.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Over time, standards of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have been consistently below national averages. This applies equally to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. In recent years, leaders have worked strenuously to improve outcomes for pupils. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to be well prepared for the next steps in their education.

As a result of improved teaching, pupils who are currently at the school are beginning to achieve well, particularly in mathematics. They enjoy lessons and are beginning to develop secure knowledge across a wide range of subjects. For example, a recent focus on art and design has resulted in pupils producing high-quality work in art of which they are justifiably proud. Pupils talk confidently about their learning. However, the quality of their written work is not consistent across the curriculum.

Leaders have a well-considered plan to continue to improve pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 6. Leaders recognise that more time is needed for their actions to become fully embedded and sustained.

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

Pupils are happy and enjoy learning at Alvaston Junior Academy. They live up to the school's motto to 'believe, achieve, succeed' in their enthusiastic approach to school life. Pupils are developing a real pride in their work. For example, classes welcome parents to come into school for the annual 'parent welcome meetings', where pupils can share their learning and the work in their books.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive skilled support to make progress from their starting points. The expert teaching in the 'Marvellous Mammoths' inclusion hub is becoming a notable asset of the school's provision.

Positive relationships support pupils to thrive. Pupils' behaviour is calm and friendly. They have positive attitudes to learning in lessons. Behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes is good. Pupils are kind and respectful to each other and to adults. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, by learning about online safety and healthy relationships. Staff encourage anyone who is worried to seek help by talking to a trusted adult.

Pupils have open and welcoming attitudes. They recognise the importance of treating everyone equally and fairly. Pupils have a well-informed awareness of cultural diversity. They respect and celebrate differences. The school fosters pupils' broader personal development well. Pupils can experience the school's outdoor facilities, such as the trim trail, rock climbing area and the quiet garden. Pupils benefit from a wide and inclusive range of enrichment activities that extend their horizons beyond the classroom.

Historically, pupils' achievements in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have been below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of leaders' recent actions, there are signs of improvement, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the actions taken to improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics are embedded and lead to sustained improvement for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders should ensure that the work in pupils' books consistently reflects their secure acquisition of knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
- Leaders should strengthen staff expertise in teaching phonics so that they become skilled in securing foundational knowledge and skills in reading for pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read.

About this inspection

The school is part of The Harmony Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Antony

Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew McCully.

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.

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the principal, senior leaders, staff, pupils, parents and carers and representatives of the multi-academy trust.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the previous inspection. The school has established an inclusion hub for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Twelve pupils currently attend this provision. All pupils who attend the inclusion hub have an education, health and care plan.

Principal: Christine Bower

Lead inspector:
Christine Watkins, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Shazia Lydon, Ofsted Inspector
Liz Ellis, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

326
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: 268

School capacity

360
Close to 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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

45.71%
Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

7.06%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

22.09%
Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	47%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	41%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	54%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	55%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	65%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	62%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	68%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	66%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	65%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	45%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	57%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average

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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	35%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	39%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	47%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	44%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	55%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	56%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	51%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	46%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	42%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	45%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	51%	59%	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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	35%	68%	-33 pp
2024/25 (final)	39%	69%	-30 pp
2023/24 (final)	35%	67%	-32 pp
2022/23 (final)	31%	66%	-36 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	47%	80%	-32 pp
2024/25 (final)	44%	81%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	80%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	41%	78%	-37 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	55%	78%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	78%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	78%	-20 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	51%	77%	-26 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	46%	80%	-33 pp
2024/25 (final)	42%	81%	-39 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	79%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	51%	79%	-28 pp

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)	5.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.4%	5.9%	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)	14.8%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	14.7%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	19.5%	16.2%	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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