

John Ferneley College

Address: Scalford Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 1LH

Unique reference number (URN): 137617

Inspection report: 22 September 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Published outcomes in 2025 show that pupils attain levels broadly close to the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities from their starting points has improved. More pupils are enjoying their learning experiences in all year groups. The quality of most pupils' work and their participation in lessons shows they are prepared for their future success. Nevertheless, a legacy of a weaker curriculum and teaching means that some pupils have not achieved as highly as they could. Leaders have addressed this by improving the quality of the curriculum and how it is taught.

Recent curriculum changes for pupils who require extra help in reading, writing and numeracy are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of this work on pupils' achievement across different subjects.

Bespoke careers guidance has helped to ensure that pupils are supported towards their next steps in further education and training.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders, along with the trust and partnership school, have successfully improved pupils' attendance. They have strengthened their oversight of individual pupils. Leaders take a range of effective actions to challenge low attendance. Consequently, rates of persistent and severe absence have significantly reduced. While attendance is improving, pupils' overall attendance is below the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders recognise this and maintain a relentless focus on securing higher levels of attendance for all pupils.

Pupils display typically positive attitudes to learning and in their conduct around the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. The atmosphere in the school is calm, orderly and friendly. Leaders have successfully raised expectations. They have equipped staff with the skills they need to manage behaviour well. Improvements in the curriculum and quality of teaching mean that pupils generally focus well. The school places a clear emphasis on praise and positive recognition. Rates of suspension have reduced dramatically.

Pupils are confident that staff would deal with any issues that arise, including bullying. School records support pupils' views, as they show that leaders take instances of bullying seriously and act quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Pupils learn an appropriately broad curriculum that meets their needs and aspirations. Since the previous inspection, leaders have reinvigorated the learning culture and developed the curriculum. Leaders ensure staff are supported by well-informed professional learning and that they follow the school's 'JFC way' framework for teaching. Leaders have raised

expectations for the quality of teaching and assessment and pupils' responses when learning.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They generally present new information and ideas clearly. They use a range of learning activities that engage pupils' interests. Pupils generally respond well to these. Teachers typically make effective use of checks on learning to ensure that pupils have understood important concepts.

Leaders have implemented a well-considered strategy to ensure that all staff have important information about disadvantaged pupils to help meet pupils' needs. However, at times, some staff do not adapt their teaching well enough to meet these needs, despite the quality of information they receive.

Reading is a priority in the school. Staff promote a culture of reading during tutor time, for example. Pupils who require extra support with reading, writing and mathematics benefit from recently improved strategies that support their learning.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. They have established effective systems to identify pupils' needs, alongside strategies to support their learning. Leaders share relevant information with staff. Staff have received appropriate professional learning, equipping them with the knowledge and guidance they need to help pupils overcome barriers to learning. However, at times, some staff do not use this knowledge to support pupils consistently well. Leaders have established effective partnership working with a range of external services, including health and social care. The school's partnership with parents and carers is generally effective, with routine opportunities to review the support their child receives.

Leaders ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Their approach is well aligned to whole-school priorities, particularly with respect to attendance and wellbeing.

The school's work to support children in the care system is highly effective, enabling these children to thrive. However, leaders recognise that some strategies to support young carers and pupils who speak English as an additional language are not as well developed as they could be.

A small number of pupils access alternative provision. Leaders consider these placements carefully, checking their effectiveness so that they are in the best interests of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, together with effective support provided by the trust, have established a clear vision for the future success of the academy. Since the last inspection, they have driven the necessary changes to improve aspects of the school, including attendance, behaviour, the curriculum and teaching. Leaders routinely check the quality of the school's provision. Consequently, they have a secure and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for further development. Staff and pupils have welcomed the changes made. Pupils

say that they feel 'listened to' and they recognise that the recent changes are in their best interests. The majority of parents and carers who shared their views echo the same sentiment.

Leaders have put in place a coherent programme of professional learning for staff, particularly underpinning the quality of teaching. Staff, including early career teachers, speak positively about the school's investment in their practice as well as their wellbeing. This has brought about a sense of unity and common purpose. Leaders are considerate about staff workload and have ensured that improvement priorities are thoughtfully introduced over time. Furthermore, current leaders have brought about the necessary stability in leadership, staffing and school finances to enable the school to begin to thrive. This has not gone unnoticed by pupils at the school either.

The trust and those responsible for governance have strengthened their oversight of the school. They ensure that all statutory duties are met. Trust leaders demonstrate an equally effective understanding of the school, complemented by a balance of challenge and support through a spirit of constructive collaboration.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that a well-considered programme for pupils' personal development is in place. Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They are knowledgeable about healthy relationships and anti-bullying. Pupils are generally well prepared for life in modern Britain. Most pupils have an accurate recall of fundamental British values and the characteristics that are protected by law, although not all are confident in understanding why these matter. Nevertheless, most pupils understand the importance of treating everyone fairly and with respect.

Pupils receive an effective careers education programme. They welcome the personal guidance afforded to them. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils who require extra help and support are a priority. Pupils welcome the opportunities to learn about the different options available to them, including visits from guest speakers, such as local colleges and the armed services. As a result, older pupils are clear about their next steps. Leaders are currently expanding the opportunities for pupils to gain meaningful work experience.

Many pupils participate in the school's enrichment experiences. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, sports, art and gaming clubs are popular with pupils. While many pupils benefit from these activities, some do not participate.

Pupils are respectful of people from different cultural backgrounds to themselves. Until recently, however, not all pupils had received high-quality provision in religious education. Consequently, some pupils cannot recall important knowledge about world religions. Leaders have addressed this issue. A new curriculum is now in place, although it is in the early stages of its implementation.

Pastoral support is effective in responding to pupils' physical and emotional needs, involving families when necessary through the school's year teams and wellbeing officers.

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

John Ferneley College is a welcoming, friendly and inclusive school. Pupils enjoy being part of its community. They feel happy and safe. Staff know pupils well and relationships are generally very positive.

Pupils say they enjoy school. They recognise the elements of the 'JFC way' that have helped the quality of their lessons to improve quickly, such as teachers showing them how to learn well. Many pupils achieve well by the end of key stage 4, including pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should nor achieve as highly as they could. Nevertheless, the large majority of pupils move on to purposeful next steps in education and training, supported by high-quality personal careers education.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Pupils respond well to these expectations. The school site is calm and orderly. Lessons are purposeful and largely free of disruption. Pupils typically interact well with one another in lessons and around the school site. Staff act quickly to remedy any barriers to learning or wellbeing that pupils may face. Pupils say that bullying sometimes happens in school but feel confident that staff will sort out issues effectively. Pupils know who they can talk to and the dedicated safe spaces they can go to if needed, including the 'worry club' for example. Pupils benefit from a well-planned pastoral system.

Pupils are increasingly encouraged to take on leadership roles in the school, such as the school's improvement, wellbeing and anti-bullying ambassadors. They look forward to the future expansion of these opportunities. There are many opportunities for pupils to join in wider school clubs and activities to further broaden their knowledge and skills.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teaching enables pupils to achieve more highly in national tests and examinations, helping more pupils to make stronger progress from their starting points across the curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that staff adapt teaching consistently well to meet pupils' specific learning needs, building on the strategies already developed, to further help these pupils to achieve as well as they can in all year groups.
- Leaders should ensure that they build on their attendance strategy so that pupils who do not attend school regularly enough improve their attendance quickly, especially pupils who are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

About this inspection

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

(CEO), Louise Lee, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Dundas.

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

This inspection took place on 22 and 23 September 2026.

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, other school leaders and staff during the inspection. They also spoke with representatives from the trust, including the CEO.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires school to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 7 alternative provisions, including 6 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Terry Claridge

Lead inspector:

Chris Stevens, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:

Julie Sheppard, Ofsted Inspector

Stuart Anderson, Ofsted Inspector

Jonathan Ferstenberg, Ofsted Inspector

Mohamed Patel, 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

1,170

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: 1,063

School capacity

1,100

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

19.57%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 30.4%

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

2.82%

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: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.97%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 14.0%

Location deprivation

Well 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).

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)	37.2%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45.1%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.6%	45.3%	Close to average

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)	43.8	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45.0	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43.9	46.3	Close to average

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)	-0.34	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.47	-0.03	Below
2021/22 (final)	-0.07	-0.03	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' 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)	22.5%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	14.7%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	16.3%	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)	32.3	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.3	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.3	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)	-1.02	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.02	-0.57	Below
2021/22 (final)	-0.23	-0.55	Above

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)	22.5%	53.1%	-30.6 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	14.7%	53.1%	-38.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	16.3%	52.4%	-36.2 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)	32.3	50.4	-18.1
2023/24 (final)	33.3	50.0	-16.7
2022/23 (final)	32.3	50.3	-18.0

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)	-1.02	0.16	-1.19
2022/23 (final)	-1.02	0.17	-1.18
2021/22 (final)	-0.23	0.15	-0.39

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)	93%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	96%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	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)	9.7%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.1%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	11.2%	9.0%	Above

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)	23.9%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	26.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	30.2%	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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