

Bladon House School

Address: Newton Solney, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, DE15 0TA

Unique reference number (URN): 113019

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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils' attendance has improved significantly. Many pupils join the school with a history of low attendance. Leaders take effective action to help pupils re-engage in their learning. They work closely with families and adapt provision to meet pupils' needs. As a result, attendance is high for all pupils. Leaders monitor attendance closely and respond quickly to any concerns.

The school's nurturing and supportive approach has enabled pupils to re-engage successfully with education and develop increasingly positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and approach their learning with purpose. Staff have a deep understanding of pupils' individual needs and apply consistent strategies that help pupils develop ways to manage their emotions and display positive behaviours. As a result, classrooms are calm and conducive to learning. Pupils engage enthusiastically in lessons, sustain their concentration and take pride in their work. They develop effective strategies to recognise and manage their emotions, enabling them to calm down independently, access support when needed and return to learning successfully. Pupils are motivated by the school's rewards systems. They strive to earn trips to the cinema or the local shops for their positive behaviour.

The school is inclusive and free from bullying or discrimination. Staff treat all pupils with respect and ensure that they feel valued.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a highly effective inclusive culture, where every pupil is treated as a unique and valued individual. Leaders' determined efforts and the dedication of the staff to transform pupils' lives shines through the ethos of the school.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many arrive with significant gaps in their learning and some with experiences of trauma. Staff identify pupils' needs quickly through careful checks, close work with families and ongoing discussions with external professionals. This means pupils receive the right support from the moment they join, including those who are disadvantaged and looked-after children. Leaders use a range of systems to check pupils' progress in building their knowledge and skills and to identify and reduce any barriers to learning. Staff review this information often and adjust support expertly when needed. Pupil voice is an integral part of school life. Pupils work closely with leaders to shape their pastoral support. They feel listened to and have a deep sense of belonging.

Alternative provision is used in the best interests of the pupils. Pupils benefit significantly from opportunities to care for and ride ponies. This helps them develop confidence, resilience and a sense of responsibility. Creative experiences in music and art enable pupils to express themselves successfully, explore their interests and develop their imagination.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

The proprietor and leaders are absolutely dedicated to ensuring that the school provides every pupil with the opportunity to thrive and belong at Bladon House School. They are determined to ensure that every effort is made to remove disadvantage, meet pupils' individual needs well and help them to achieve well. Pupils' best interests are at the heart of all decisions made by leaders.

Leaders have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and development priorities. The proprietor provides effective oversight of school improvement and works closely with leaders to validate the school's self-evaluation and monitor the impact of the school's improvement work. School leaders, alongside the proprietor, have played an important role in strengthening curriculum design, developing leadership capacity and supporting the refinement of assessment systems in a timely manner. This has contributed positively to the quality of education and the school's continued improvement. The proprietor understands its legal responsibilities to ensure the welfare of pupils and compliance with the independent school standards (the standards). Leaders have ensured that the standards are met consistently over time.

Staff speak positively about working at the school and value the deep sense of teamwork that exists across the staff body. They appreciate the support provided by leaders to promote their wellbeing and manage their workload effectively. Leaders invest in high-quality, evidence-informed professional development that strengthens staff expertise, builds confidence and supports career progression. As a result, staff feel well supported, are committed to the school's vision and are highly effective in meeting the needs of pupils.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school, describing Bladon House as, 'life changing and an amazing place that is one big family'. Leaders, staff, parents and the proprietor are united in their determination to ensure that Bladon House is, 'An extraordinary and unique school that is an inclusive, happy and thriving community'.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Personal development is a considerable strength of the school and is woven purposefully throughout pupils' daily experiences. Leaders have designed a coherent and carefully sequenced programme that reflects pupils' developmental stages, rather than solely their chronological age. This ensures that learning is relevant, accessible and meaningful, enabling pupils to acquire the knowledge, understanding and personal attributes needed to thrive both within and beyond school.

Pupil voice is a defining feature of the provision. Pupils contribute actively to decision-making through the school council and other leadership opportunities, influencing aspects of school life such as resources and activities. As a result, pupils develop confidence, responsibility and a strong sense of belonging within the school community.

The breadth of experiences available to pupils is a notable strength. An extensive range of enrichment activities, educational visits and community experiences broadens pupils' horizons and provides opportunities to apply their learning in real-life contexts. These

experiences are chosen carefully to promote independence, resilience, social skills and personal responsibility.

Highly effective pastoral support underpins pupils' personal development. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and create an environment in which pupils feel safe, valued and supported. Consequently, pupils develop increasing self-confidence, emotional resilience and independence. They learn to manage relationships positively, make informed choices and contribute successfully to school life.

The school prepares pupils well for life beyond education. Careers education, information, advice and guidance are highly personalised and take account of pupils' individual aspirations, strengths and needs. When possible, pupils participate in workplace experiences that help them develop employability skills and an understanding of future pathways.

The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Through assemblies, discussions and planned learning, pupils explore important moral and ethical issues, develop an understanding of important fundamental British values and learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. Relationships, sex and health education is delivered sensitively and appropriately, ensuring that pupils gain the knowledge they need to make safe and informed decisions.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils, parents and carers recognise the value of the school's provision and speak positively about the impact it has had on pupils' lives. This is reflected in the progress pupils make from, often, complex starting points, that include significant social, emotional and mental health needs and disrupted educational experiences. Over time, pupils become increasingly engaged in school life, participate confidently in lessons and contribute meaningfully to discussions across the curriculum. Evidence in pupils' work demonstrates clear progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding, reflecting the positive difference that the school makes to their learning and development.

Pupils who struggle to read or use number consistently, learn to do so well during their time at school. Those who experience difficulty in learning to write, similarly, develop the skills and confidence to write more, with flair and skill. The skilful use of communication aids ensures that every pupil can articulate their learning. Pupils are prepared well for their next stages.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have designed a curriculum that responds effectively to pupils' varied starting points, with a clear emphasis on addressing gaps in pupils' prior learning. The curriculum is ambitious and structured carefully so that pupils' knowledge and skills build systematically over time. Working closely with pupils and giving them targeted individual support enables

staff to develop positive relationships with pupils and to tailor learning effectively to pupils' needs. Staff are trained well and typically implement the curriculum successfully. That said, at times in a small number of subjects, there is some variation in how suitable the design of a task is for the intended learning and it is, therefore, not as highly effective.

Staff are relentless in their focus on pupils gaining the basic skills that they need for their future pathways. Reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised both as content in their own right but also as part of the wider curriculum. Alongside this, effective consideration is given to individual pupil's targets in their education, health and care plans. These are woven into the daily learning and support used in and out of the classroom. Both staff and leaders keep a close eye on the positive difference this makes to pupils. Staff teach phonics with precision and promote the joy of reading. Pupils love to read in the inviting, cosy reading areas.

Post-16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed 'pathways' for post-16 students to access their learning. The 'Open Skies' post-16 programme is tailored suitably to students' needs and provides a meaningful blend of academic, personal and life-skills learning. This helps students make progress towards their individual goals and prepares them effectively for adulthood. Students typically make secure progress in their learning and achieve well.

The curriculum focuses on building students' independence, communication and skills for life. Students learn functional reading and mathematics through activities such as cooking, shopping, and handling money. They also practise hygiene routines and learn the importance of social skills. Staff check on students' learning closely and adapt teaching to their individual needs. As a result, students engage well with learning. Students' views are considered appropriately and contribute to decisions about future learning pathways.

The school offers a broad range of subjects, including vocational courses, such as hair and beauty, horticulture and animal care. Access to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme strengthen students' personal development. Students also benefit from volunteering and work experience. These experiences help them to develop confidence in accessing local amenities and interacting with others. They are well prepared for their next steps in life.

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

Pupils are welcomed warmly by caring and dedicated staff at this inclusive and nurturing school. They soon learn 'The Bladon Way' and model the school's values of, 'Look after everything, try your best, be kind to everyone and make good choices'. Pupils behave extremely well. They say that bullying is never an issue and are confident that staff are there to help them if they have any worries.

All pupils in the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities and an education, health and care plan. Staff use these plans very well from the outset. Pupils feel safe, secure and well supported because staff have a detailed understanding of their individual

needs. As a result, pupils are quickly ready to learn, engage positively in lessons and participate fully in school life.

Pupils benefit greatly from the school's farm and woodland setting, which provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop responsibility, confidence and emotional regulation. Through caring for, and spending time with, the animals, including guinea pigs, goats and Willow the therapy dog, pupils gain a sense of purpose and achievement that supports their wellbeing and self-esteem. Pupils are happy, engaged and able to talk proudly about the responsibilities they undertake and the contribution they make to the school community.

Pupils, including students in the post-16 provision, achieve well. They receive personalised learning and support to help them to attend well and enjoy learning in a calm environment. Classrooms and the way pupils access education, are designed thoughtfully to ease pupils' anxiety and promote their wellbeing.

An extensive range of enrichment activities, educational visits and community experiences broadens pupils' horizons and provides opportunities for them to apply their learning in real-life contexts. Pupils engage enthusiastically in preparing healthy meals and participating in shopping trips that help to develop their independence and wellbeing. They also contribute positively to the wider community through fundraising initiatives and local events.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their high ambition for the curriculum and teaching is embedded consistently, including ensuring that the design of learning tasks routinely enable pupils to deepen their learning further over time.
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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.

The inspection started on 30 June 2026. It was paused in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence. Inspectors returned on 8 July 2026 to complete the inspection.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders, as well as staff and pupils. Inspectors also met with a proprietor representative during the inspection. Inspectors visited lessons and spoke with pupils and staff. They also reviewed documents in relation to the curriculum, teaching and learning, the provision for pupils with special educational needs

and/or disabilities, recruitment, safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment. Inspectors considered the school’s safeguarding arrangements, including the single central record of pre-employment checks and whether the school’s safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers.

The name of the proprietor is The SENAD Group Limited. The chair of the proprietor body is Richard Atkinson.

The fees currently charged are £110,800 to £146,000.

The email address of the school is Bladon.frontoffice@senadgroup.com

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 2 unregistered alternative provisions.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils have a range of complex special educational needs and/or disabilities, including autism, speech, language and communication needs, moderate or severe learning difficulties, and social, emotional and mental health needs. The school also provides for pupils with Prader-Willi syndrome.

Headteacher: Shally Saleri-Palmer

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 proprietorsStandards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schoolsStandards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of informationStandards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handledStandards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schoolsStandards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:
Kirsty Norbury, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
John Spragg, His Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Long, Ofsted 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

68

School capacity

100

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

68

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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