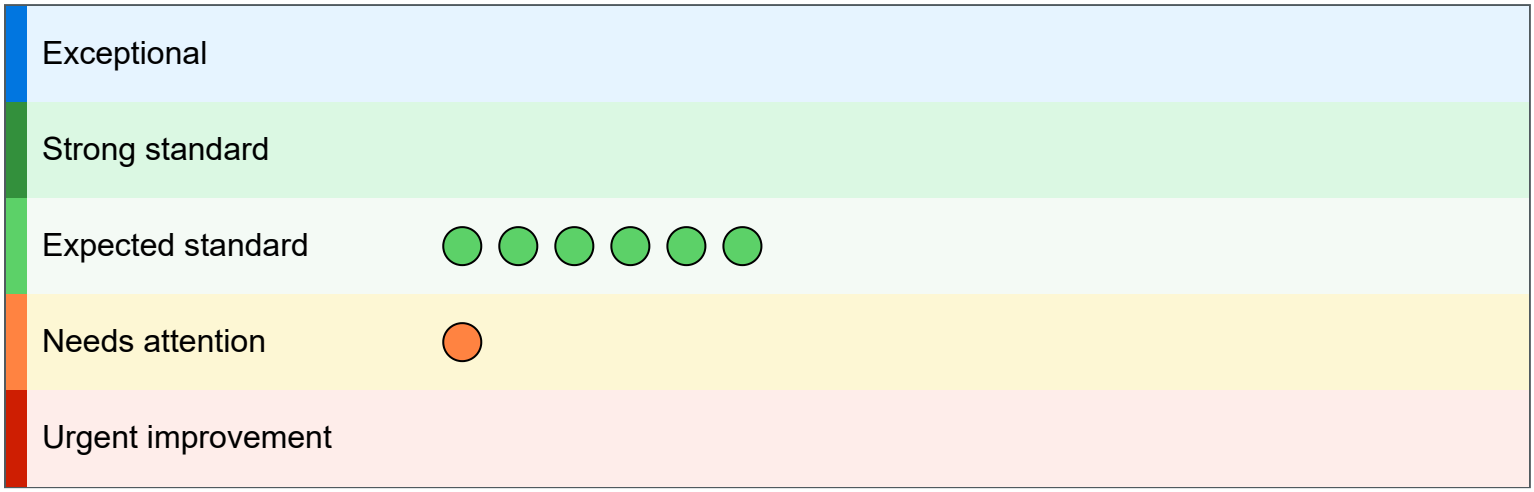
# Sir Bernard Lovell Academy

**Address:** North Street, BS30 8TS

**Unique reference number (URN):** 141665

# Inspection report: 13 January 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

## Achievement

**Expected standard**

Pupils typically learn the intended curriculum effectively and are ready for their next steps in employment, education or training. Pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 4 is typically in line with their peers nationally. Most pupils, in most subjects, achieve well. However, the depth of pupils' knowledge and understanding is not consistently secure across all areas of their learning. Disadvantaged pupils typically achieve as well as their disadvantaged peers nationally in many of their qualifications. However, post-16 students do not achieve as well as they should in their qualifications.

Pupils who have not become confident and accurate readers are supported to improve quickly. Pupils who need additional support to write accurately receive targeted help to develop these necessary skills. However, pupils are not consistently supported to maintain the same high standard of written work across all areas of the curriculum.

## Attendance and behaviour

**Expected standard**

The school and the trust are highly ambitious to ensure that all pupils have excellent attendance. Leaders have worked with great determination to raise overall attendance and reduce persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils speak proudly of their high attendance. Staff closely check absence so that timely and highly effective support is put in place to overcome barriers to attendance. The diligent work of tutors and pastoral staff, in partnership with families, has had a clear positive impact on creating a culture where pupils feel a sense of belonging.

Leaders have set high expectations for the conduct of pupils. Pupils are clear about how they should behave, and they appreciate the rewards they receive for behaving well. Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and adults. The school is a place where any form of bullying, discrimination or harassment is not tolerated. On the rare occasion when incidents occur, pupils are confident to report any concerns to adults, knowing that they will help. Staff ensure that the school behaviour policy is consistently applied. When pupils need additional help to change their behaviour, leaders act effectively. Consequently, the school is calm, and the use of suspensions and other sanctions has reduced.

## Curriculum and teaching

**Expected standard**

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Leaders have carefully set out what pupils will learn so that they build their knowledge and understanding. Subject leaders review how well the curriculum is taught and make improvements when required. Staff have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum and qualifications offered at each key stage.

In many areas of the curriculum, the quality of teaching is highly effective. Teachers explain concepts clearly and help pupils to practise and reinforce their learning. Pupils in key stage 4 in particular benefit from opportunities to deepen their understanding of the subjects that they study. However, at times, teachers do not check thoroughly enough what pupils know

and can do. This means that teaching is not consistently adjusted effectively to address any gaps or misconceptions. The strategies staff employ to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are used more effectively in some areas of the curriculum than others.

Leaders have prioritised developing pupils' literacy skills and core mathematics skills. The reading culture of the school encourages pupils to develop a love of reading. Those who have not developed the foundations of reading are identified. Well-trained staff provide support that helps these pupils to catch up with their peers.

## Inclusion

**Expected standard**

Leaders have a clear commitment for all pupils to feel part of the Sir Bernard Lovell community. Staff swiftly identify the individual educational and pastoral needs of pupils when they join the school. Bespoke support is then planned in partnership with other agencies. For example, the school has a wide range of support available for pupils with mental health challenges. This means that pupils receive the right help, at the right time. Leaders use additional funding appropriately to support disadvantaged pupils. The alternative provision used by the school is in the best interests of pupils. Leaders have systems to review the impact of the additional support provided to pupils. This helps to identify when changes need to be made to further improve pupils' experiences.

Staff use their training to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers typically use strategies effectively to support pupils with SEND to learn as well as their peers. This is not consistently the case, which at times makes it harder for these pupils to learn as well as they could. When pupils need additional support to catch up, for example with reading, help is available. Students in the sixth form particularly appreciate how well teachers adapt their teaching to meet their needs.

## Leadership and governance

**Expected standard**

Leaders and those responsible for governance keep the best interests of pupils at the heart of their decisions. The school is welcoming and inclusive for pupils. Leaders understand the strengths and areas of development at the school. They use this understanding to prioritise actions and make a difference for pupils. For example, they have improved attendance and the personal development offer so that more pupils benefit from the opportunities offered by the school. Leaders have rightly identified the need for further improvements within the post-16 provision and have begun to address these areas.

The school provides the professional learning that staff need to be successful in their roles. They support teachers early in their career to become confident and skilled professionals. Leaders engage with staff to identify opportunities to improve their workload and wellbeing. Staff who oversee safeguarding and pastoral issues feel well supported including by the collaborative culture in which they work. In turn, this means that these staff can provide the highest quality of support for pupils.

Trustees and governors understand their roles and responsibilities. They work with leaders and their chosen external partners to provide the challenge and support needed to make

sustainable improvements to the school. This is evident in the way the school has continually reviewed the safeguarding practices so that they are a strength of the school. However, they have not provided the same robust oversight of the actions taken to make improvements to the sixth form.

### Personal development and wellbeing

**Expected standard**

The conduct of pupils reflects the school's values of respect, opportunity, collaboration and aspiration. Pupils understand that these are important elements of being a positive citizen in modern Britain. Pupils are respectful of others and learn about different cultures and religions. The members of the student leadership team wear their ties with pride. This signals to younger pupils that they are there to help them.

Leaders have revised the taught 'personal and social development' curriculum. There is an age-appropriate coverage of topics such as relationships and personal safety. As a result, pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider community. In addition, the wider curriculum, such as physical education, helps pupils look after their physical and mental health. The range of careers events planned for each year group means that pupils are well informed about the possible routes available for their next steps. This includes opportunities to work with employers to experience the world of work.

Leaders ensure that pupils broaden their horizons, social skills and interests during their time at the school. This includes community activities, such as helping to welcome new Year 7 pupils to the school, or personal challenges such as the Duke of Edinburgh's award. Leaders remove any barriers to participation for disadvantaged pupils. Increasing numbers of pupils complete the '50 things at Sir Bernard Lovell'. A range of clubs and groups support pupils to develop their talents and interests. For example, pupils learn to play chess or engage in debates. Trips and visits bring the curriculum to life. The whole-school drama productions unite pupils across the year groups in a range of performance and backstage roles. Older pupils act as role models for younger pupils in the houses. Inter-house challenges see pupils in the Atlas, Callisto, Europa and Titan houses enter good-natured competition.

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## Needs attention

### Post 16 provision

**Needs attention**

Post-16 students do not achieve as well as they should in their qualifications. This means that some are not as well prepared for the next steps into education, employment or training as they should be. School and trust leaders have identified post-16 provision as a priority for improvement.

The school provides a 16 to 19 study programme of qualifications and wider opportunities that meets the needs of students. Leaders have set higher expectations for students' attendance and engagement with learning. They have begun to take steps to improve the quality of teaching in the sixth form. However, leaders have not ensured that students

consistently develop appropriate knowledge and skills. As leaders' improvement work has been recent, it is too early to see the impact of this work, particularly on the current attainment of students.

Teachers know the students in the sixth form well as individuals. This makes students feel cared for. Students appreciate how teachers adapt learning opportunities to meet their needs. Leaders have ensured that the wider opportunities provided for students are preparing them effectively for adult life. Students learn about age-appropriate topics such as finance and personal safety. Volunteering opportunities, such as being reading buddies for younger pupils, help to develop their leadership skills. Individual careers advice supports students to prepare for university or employment interviews. Students are increasingly aspirational for their next steps.

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

Pupils at Sir Bernard Lovell Academy are proud of their school and enjoy their learning. Leaders, with the support of the trust, have planned an ambitious curriculum. This allows pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding across a broad range of subjects. Pupils in key stage 4 typically successfully complete the qualifications that they need to move on to their next steps. However, students in the sixth form do not achieve as highly as they should in their chosen academic courses.

The pastoral support offered to pupils is highly effective. The school's determination to provide the best experience for all pupils is clear. Pupils feel safe and have positive relationships with adults and their peers. The school has high expectations for behaviour, which means that pupils can learn without disruption. Bullying is rare and never tolerated. Pupils attend well. They know how important it is to access learning. The individual barriers that pupils have for either their learning or wellbeing are carefully identified. Staff take steps to reduce these for pupils, for example with mental health support or reading intervention.

Pupils are well prepared for adult life through the high-quality personal development programme. Pupils understand the importance of school values, such as cooperation and honesty, in helping them to understand active citizenship. Activities such as house competitions and the school production help to develop pupils' talents and interests. The student leaders are proud to be ambassadors for the school and develop their leadership skills. For example, they give presentations at open evenings. Pupils enjoy representing the school through sporting competitions and volunteering. Sixth-form pupils act as role models, including as buddy readers for younger pupils.

## Next steps

• Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that the actions taken to improve the quality of post-16 provision are embedded to raise the attainment and improve the educational experiences of students swiftly and effectively.
• Leaders should ensure that highly effective formative assessment is consistently used across all subjects so that pupils build securely on their prior learning and achieve highly.

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## About this inspection

This school is part of Futura Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gary Schlick, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Malcolm Broad.

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.

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.

Inspectors spoke with school senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff, support staff, trust executive leaders, local governors and representatives of the trust board.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 6 alternative provisions, including 5 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Dr Robin Bassford

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**Lead inspector:**
Sara Berry, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**
Deirdre Fitzpatrick, Ofsted Inspector
John Weeds, Ofsted Inspector
Helen Kerr, Ofsted Inspector
Parin Gohil, Ofsted Inspector

# Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

This data is from 13 January 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**1,261**
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: 1,067

### School capacity

**1,409**
Above 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: 1,152

### Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

**18.16%**
Below average

### What does this mean?

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

National average: 28.9%

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

## 3.33%
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: 3.09%

**Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

## 15.23%
Close to average

**What does this mean?**

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

National average: 13.4%

**Location deprivation**

## 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** | 42.9% | 45.2% | Close to average |
| **2023/24** | 47.4% | 45.9% | Close to average |
| **2022/23** | 54.4% | 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** | 44.3 | 45.9 | Close to average |
| **2023/24** | 48.3 | 45.9 | Close to average |
| **2022/23** | 49.1 | 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** | 0.08 | -0.03 | Close to average |
| **2022/23** | 0.37 | -0.03 | Above |

## 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** | 12.2% | 25.6% | Below |
| **2023/24** | 12.5% | 25.8% | Below |
| **2022/23** | 38.2% | 25.2% | Above |

### 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** | 32.8 | 34.9 | Close to average |
| **2023/24** | 32.5 | 34.6 | Close to average |
| **2022/23** | 40.0 | 35.0 | Above |

### 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** | -0.76 | -0.57 | Close to average |
| **2022/23** | -0.38 | -0.57 | 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' 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** | 12.2% | 52.8% | -40.6 pp |
| **2023/24** | 12.5% | 53.1% | -40.6 pp |
| **2022/23** | 38.2% | 52.4% | -14.2 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** | 32.8 | 50.3 | -17.5 |
| **2023/24** | 32.5 | 50.0 | -17.5 |
| **2022/23** | 40.0 | 50.3 | -10.3 |

### 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** | -0.76 | 0.16 | -0.93 |
| **2022/23** | -0.38 | 0.17 | -0.55 |

## 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** | 92% | 91% | Average |
| **2022 leavers** | 95% | 93% | Average |
| **2021 leavers** | 96% | 94% | Average |

## 16 to 18 performance

### A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

| Year | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2024/25** | R | R | R |
| **2023/24** | 29.71 | 34.38 | Below |
| **2022/23** | 28.50 | 34.16 | Below |

### A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

| Year | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2024/25** | R | R | R |
| **2023/24** | -0.5 | 0.0 | Below |

The Key Stage 5 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. 'R' in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

# 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 (2 terms)** | 8.5% | 8.1% | Close to average |
| **2023/24** | 9.3% | 8.9% | Close to average |
| **2022/23** | 8.1% | 9.0% | 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 (2 terms)** | 20.6% | 21.9% | Close to average |
| **2023/24** | 23.9% | 25.6% | Close to average |
| **2022/23** | 21.1% | 26.5% | Below |

## 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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