

Sedgemoor Manor School

Address: Blackford Road, Mark, Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 4NP

Unique reference number (URN): 123933

Inspection report: 12 May 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion is the bedrock of the school's success. While leaders and staff recognise the difficulties that many pupils have faced in previous settings, they do not lessen their expectations of pupils. Instead, they work closely with families and other wider professionals so that they understand pupils' needs well. This begins before pupils join the school. Home visits are used to build a well-rounded view of pupils' strengths and barriers to learning. Staff produce learning plans which fully reflect the precise and individual needs of each pupil. Plans explicitly outline the strategies and support that pupils need to be successful, engaged and independent learners. As a result, all staff have a thorough knowledge of pupils. They implement these plans highly effectively and consistently provide the support that pupils need to flourish.

Leaders meticulously check the impact of these strategies. This includes the targets identified on pupils' education, health and care plans. As a result, leaders are able to swiftly make further adjustments based on pupils' changing needs. Leaders recognise the importance of supporting pupils well beyond their academic learning. For example, they provide additional support with transport when pupils visit workplace settings.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Many pupils arrive at the school with gaps in their knowledge. Increasingly, pupils' knowledge and skills are well below age-related expectations when they join the school. Leaders ensure they quickly identify where pupils' gaps are on entry to the school. They have recently broadened the extent of these checks. This helps to ensure that staff have a thorough and well-informed understanding of what pupils can do. Pupils typically acquire the basic skills they need for English and mathematics. Occasionally, some of this learning is variable, particularly in spelling, handwriting and learning key mathematical facts. Pupils generally learn the phonics code well to help access their learning across the curriculum.

From their starting points, most pupils progress well through the curriculum. Pupils acquire a range of qualifications, such as GCSEs and BTEC National Diplomas. This means they are well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Leaders communicate the importance of attendance. Some pupils have missed large parts of their education before starting at the school. Leaders understand that some pupils do not recognise the importance of high attendance on arrival at the setting. They work closely with families to establish a culture where it is understood that regular attendance is an expectation of the school. If pupils' attendance drops, staff quickly make contact with parents and carers to address any issues. Staff make suitable adaptations to help overcome

any potential barriers. For example, pupils' transition into the school is well considered, with bespoke timetables to help them settle well. As a result, overall attendance and the rate of persistent absence are rapidly improving.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Staff's positive relationships with pupils promote an environment that is calm and orderly. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' love for learning becomes increasingly deep over time. This reflects the impact of staff's consistent and highly effective work on ensuring pupils are ready to learn. Staff provide suitable support and adaptations for pupils who struggle to manage their emotions. Leaders deal with any unkindness between pupils and incidents of bullying swiftly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a broad and ambitious curriculum. It is carefully sequenced so that pupils build on what they have learned before. Leaders carry out regular checks on the curriculum and how it is taught. This enables them to understand the changing needs of pupils and cohorts. They use this insight to refine and adapt the curriculum so that pupils learn more effectively.

Teachers generally teach the curriculum well. Their expectations of pupils typically match the high ambition of the curriculum. Teachers use questioning effectively to check what pupils understand. They encourage pupils to explain their thinking, as well as promoting debates in topics such as the use of mobile phones in schools. This helps to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers ensure that pupils receive the adaptations they need in order to be successful in their learning. For example, they break learning down into small sections to help pupils understand new concepts securely.

Teachers quickly spot pupils who have fallen behind in their learning and provide additional support as necessary. However, sometimes teachers are not rigorous enough in their teaching of English and mathematics. They do not insist on well-formed handwriting or correct spelling. As a result, some pupils repeat their errors.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders at all levels are driven by a moral purpose to enrich and improve the educational experiences of pupils. Their decision-making is rooted in making choices that are in pupils' best interests. For example, leaders have ensured that as the numbers on roll have increased, staff have maintained their deep knowledge of pupils and provide highly effective support. This is because leaders ensure that staff are well trained to have the expertise to adapt pupils' provision effectively. This includes new staff, who quickly get to know pupils' needs well. Leaders understand the context of their school well. They are ambitious for the school and are realistic about where its strengths lie and where there is more to do. However, in some aspects of the school's work, leaders' analysis is less precise. This makes it difficult to improve some areas as successfully as they intend.

The proprietor body provides effective and timely support and adapts this based on the school's evolving needs. This covers the full range of the school's work, from health and safety to support with the curriculum. As a result, the school meets the independent school

standards in full. The proprietor body makes regular checks on the school's work. This allows it to have an accurate view of the school.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that they always have a leader or colleague they can approach to discuss workload and wellbeing. Most parents' and carers' views of the school are positive. They appreciate how staff strive to give their very best for pupils. Parents comment on the positive changes they have seen in their child, both emotionally and academically.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school provides a rich range of experiences for pupils beyond the academic. This helps to develop pupils' independence and social skills and prepares them well for adulthood. For example, a group of pupils participate in the annual Ten Tors event. Pupils discover new interests through the school's weekly enrichment time. Staff work with pupils and families to remove any potential barriers to participation. While leaders plan these carefully, they are also responsive to individual pupils' needs and interests. For example, from leaders' identification, pupils benefit from additional therapeutic support beyond what is set out in their education, health and care plans.

Pupils are taught to keep safe in the local community and online. For example, they understand the dangers of misinformation on social media. Leaders ensure that pupils learn, and generally understand, the key components of the relationships and sex education curriculum. However, despite diversity and fundamental British values being at the heart of the academic curriculum, pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is limited. Furthermore, for some pupils, their recall of the personal, social and health education programme is patchy.

The school has a highly effective careers offer. Leaders ensure that pupils receive impartial advice to allow them to make informed decisions. Staff tailor pupils' work experience to their interests to allow them to gain first-hand experience of a career that interests them. In addition, staff ensure pupils understand that careers can change as they get older. This helps pupils to learn the importance of their education and of acquiring a broad set of knowledge and skills.

Pupils have a voice in the school through the student council. They learn the importance of their local community through voluntary work in places such as a church and a cattery. Leaders broadly check the participation of pupils across its personal development offer. However, they do not check with enough precision pupils' participation over time so they can check where provision might be improved further.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Students' positive educational journey at Sedgemoor Manor continues into the post-16 provision. Leaders' deep knowledge of students allows them to create a bespoke, ambitious curriculum based on their starting points. Teachers typically implement the curriculum well. They identify students who have left key stage 4 without the essential English and mathematics knowledge expected for their age. Staff's timely and appropriate support helps

them to catch up. Students take noticeable pride in their work and achieve well in a range of subjects.

Leaders place a high emphasis on students being prepared for life beyond their academic studies. They ensure that students can pursue opportunities to enhance their employability, such as work experience with local employers. Students learn about key life skills, such as budgeting. As a result, students are well prepared for their next stage of employment or training.

The school also has a long-established partnership with a local college. This continues to benefit students who are able to undertake a wide variety of appropriate qualifications. However, leaders acknowledge that their oversight of how this dovetails with the school's work and the impact of this on pupils' outcomes could be further strengthened.

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

This school helps to rebuild young people's and families' trust in education. Leaders and staff unite to turn pupils' previous negative experiences of school into a positive one. Most pupils develop a love of learning. Warm, caring relationships permeate the school. Many new starters have missed large parts of their education. Staff's nurture and compassion help them to overcome their anxieties to feel safe and secure. This also helps pupils' attendance to improve compared to their time in previous settings. Pupils know that staff are always available if they need to discuss any worries.

Pupils benefit from a typically well-taught and wide-ranging curriculum. Staff provide highly effective support to help pupils learn successfully. Consequently, from a variety of starting points, pupils achieve well. As a result, they are typically ready for their next stage of education. This includes students in the post-16 provision, who follow a variety of individualised routes tailored to their needs and interests. Pupils embark on a range of trips that not only link to their learning but open their eyes to potential career paths. Pupils' learning about life beyond their locality also helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Pupils' character development is rooted through all aspects of the school's work. For example, pupils take great pride in taking care of the school's wide range of animals, from lizards to goats. This helps pupils to become empathic, thoughtful citizens. Pupils develop a deep sense of self-worth, and feel recognised by staff as being unique individuals through events such as 'Diversity Rocks'. Pupils' behaviour in class is highly positive and improves over time in the school. They are polite and courteous. In lessons, they demonstrate a curiosity in their learning. Bullying is rare but leaders deal with this quickly if it occurs.

Next steps

- Leaders should improve pupils' foundational skills in English and mathematics, including handwriting, by ensuring teachers consistently teach these well and address gaps.

- Leaders should use the information they gather on personal development, achievement, attendance and behaviour to evaluate the impact of improvement strategies more precisely, so that these areas continue to improve.
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About this inspection

All pupils who attend this school have an education, health and care plan.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a range of staff. Inspectors also met with the chair of the proprietor board, the regional director and other leaders of the proprietor body.

The lead inspector considered concerns raised with the Department for Education about safeguarding and the leadership and governance of the school. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the incidents were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' evaluations.

Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey for parents and carers.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

Sedgemoor Manor School is a specialist provision for pupils with a diagnosis of autism and associated complex needs. Their placements are funded by several different local authorities.

The school is included on the list of approved independent special schools, in accordance with section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.

The headteacher took up his post in September 2025.

The fees currently charged range from £103,333 to £132,592.

The name of the proprietor is Aspris Children's Services Ltd. The chair of this group is Nancy O'Regan.

The email address for the school is: sedgemoormanorschool@aspriscs.co.uk.

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:

Jason Edge, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Tracy Hannon, 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 12 May 2026

Total pupils

97

School capacity

100

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

97

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.

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