

# The Cottesloe School

**Address:** Church Street, Wing, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, LU7 0NY

**Unique reference number (URN):** 110533

## Inspection report: 17 March 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.

## Strong standard ●

### Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have developed a comprehensive personal development programme. This helps pupils grow into responsible, resilient and respectful young people. Pupils learn to behave independently. This includes those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The personal, health, social and economic (PSHE) education programme is carefully organised so pupils revisit important learning over time, which happens, for example, in assemblies and during wider opportunities. Pupils develop mature attitudes about consent and what constitutes a healthy relationship. They develop a rich understanding of how to keep themselves safe personally. They know how to avoid risky behaviour outside of school and while online. Leaders adapt the teaching of PSHE so that pupils with SEND are very well prepared for life beyond the school.

Pupils develop a detailed understanding of fundamental British values, such as tolerance. This creates an inclusive culture. Leaders ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to learn about different faiths and debate current social issues. Pupils engage thoughtfully with views that differ to their own.

Leaders ensure that there is highly effective pastoral care. Staff know pupils well. Staff are well trained to identify pupils who may need additional help. The school ensures that pupils get the required support, including mentoring and counselling. Leaders draw on the expertise of external agencies when needed.

Pupils develop their talents and interests through the extensive extra-curricular offer. All pupils are encouraged to take part. Leaders carefully use the pupil premium funding to ensure barriers to participation are removed for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils value the sense of belonging that participating in these activities brings.

Careers information and guidance is well established and carefully planned. Pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to learn from different employers at the school's careers fairs. Work experience is closely matched to pupils' interests and aspirations. Consequently, pupils move on to meaningful next steps, such as in education or training.

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## Expected standard ●

### Achievement

Expected standard ●

Across the curriculum, pupils gain appropriate knowledge and skills. They develop a depth of understanding that is reflected in the quality of their work. Pupils who face barriers to their learning are typically supported to achieve well. They gain secure foundations in reading and writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well from their individual starting points.

Outcomes in national assessments in Year 11 are typically in line with national averages. This includes for disadvantaged pupils. In the post-16 provision, students achieve well by

the end of key stage 5. They do especially well in vocational qualifications. Consequently, pupils move on to positive and appropriate destinations.

## **Attendance and behaviour**

**Expected standard** ●

Leaders consistently promote the importance of attending well. They closely monitor trends and patterns in absence. Where pupils require additional help to attend well, leaders engage positively with parents and external agencies. Mostly, pupils attend school regularly. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Adjustments are made for disadvantaged pupils to help remove their barriers to attendance. This includes effective pastoral support. This is helping more disadvantaged pupils to attend well.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand the established routines and rules for their conduct. Staff apply these consistently and model the respectful attitudes they expect from pupils. Pupils benefit from calm classrooms where learning is rarely disrupted. They typically display positive attitudes to, and remain focused on, their learning. Throughout the day, pupils are courteous and well mannered. This supports orderly lesson changeovers and social times.

Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour carefully. This enables them to make appropriate adaptations for pupils who may need help to manage their behaviour. Suspensions are used appropriately. Instances of bullying, discrimination and derogatory language are rare. Pupils are confident that staff will take swift action to address any concerns they may have.

## **Curriculum and teaching**

**Expected standard** ●

The school's curriculum is broad and tailored to pupils' needs and interests. It is well designed and builds on what pupils have learned previously. Leaders have a secure understanding of the strengths of the curriculum and teaching, and where further refinement is needed.

Leaders have designed an effective professional learning programme to help teachers deliver the curriculum with greater consistency. Teachers display secure subject knowledge. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to remember what they have learned previously. This helps pupils to build their knowledge of increasingly complex ideas over time. Teaching is more effective when the school's agreed approaches are consistently applied. At times, teachers do not always use their checks on what pupils know and can do to adapt subsequent learning activities. For example, some pupils' learning does not get extended enough. Conversely, sometimes, misconceptions are not addressed before pupils move on to new learning.

Pupils generally get the help they need to secure foundational knowledge in handwriting, reading and mathematics. Leaders use assessment to identify where pupils require additional help. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Through regular, targeted interventions, pupils who need extra help are typically well supported to read and write with increasing confidence and accuracy. However, there is less precision in identifying the specific barriers pupils face in mathematical knowledge.

## **Inclusion**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders have established effective systems to identify pupils' barriers to learning promptly. For instance, leaders work closely with the school's feeder primary schools. This helps leaders understand where specific pastoral support may be needed when pupils join Year 7. Teachers receive expert training about how best to support pupils. Staff receive helpful information about how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff use this well to adapt learning. For example, well-trained 'assistant teachers' provide appropriate support so that pupils can access their learning. Targeted support, including small-group reading and handwriting practice, makes a difference for pupils who need it. Where aspects of inclusion are being refined, leaders know what needs further development. This includes identifying the precise support some disadvantaged pupils need in the classroom and monitoring closely the impact of small-group numeracy support.

Leaders use the pupil premium funding diligently. An example is to support disadvantaged pupils to broaden their enrichment opportunities. Leaders work closely with families and external professionals, including in the virtual school. They choose alternative provision carefully and in the best interests of pupils. The school regularly checks on pupils' progress in these settings to ensure they continue to meet pupils' needs.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have high expectations for pupils' achievement. Leaders and those responsible for governance make decisions in the best interests of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Governors share leaders' vision for the school. They are committed to ensuring vulnerable pupils are well supported personally and academically through the school's strands of inclusion. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. They ensure that additional funding is used appropriately, for example so that disadvantaged pupils benefit fully from the school's wider opportunities. Those responsible for governance typically provide the challenge and support needed for the right improvements to the school.

Leaders engage constructively with parents and carers. Parents feel included in decisions, such as those made for pupils with SEND and those who attend alternative provision. Parents are positive about the support the school provides for their children.

Staff, including those in the early stage of their career, benefit from high-quality professional learning. Training is focused on the school's priorities for improvement. This includes building expertise to improve the consistency of teaching across the curriculum. Leaders are considerate of staff workload when planning professional learning and designing the school calendar. This enables staff to manage their time effectively. Staff feel valued by leaders. They appreciate the many initiatives to support their wellbeing. Staff are proud members of the school community.

Leaders ensure that the post-16 provision offers an inclusive and supportive environment. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the sixth form. They have designed an ambitious programme with academic and vocational pathways that are appropriate for students.

Teaching is highly effective. Knowledgeable staff deliver engaging and challenging lessons. Teachers use assessment well. They then make any adaptations that students may need to be successful. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, students gain detailed knowledge and skills. This is broadly reflected in their achievement in national examinations.

Students are proud of their sixth form. They benefit from a carefully planned enrichment programme that is tailored to their interests. For example, many participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Students consistently act as positive role models to their younger peers. This includes becoming wellbeing ambassadors and visiting the local primary school to listen to younger pupils read. These experiences enable students to develop their independence, which prepares them well for life beyond school.

Leaders provide students with comprehensive careers advice and guidance. Students benefit from meaningful work experience opportunities that are tailored to their aspirations. Consequently, students, including those who are disadvantaged, are well equipped to make informed decisions about their next steps in education or the world of work.

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

Pupils feel a strong sense of pride and belonging at The Cottesloe School. For many, it 'feels like a family'. This is evident in the positive relationships pupils have with staff and each other. Pupils know that the staff want the best for them. This is reflected in the high expectations and aspirations staff have for pupils.

The school is a calm and warm environment. Pupils feel safe and want to attend. This is because leaders have built a culture based on mutual respect where pupils look out for each other. During lessons and at social times, pupils behave well. They follow the high expectations leaders have for their conduct. These are applied consistently by staff. Bullying and the use of derogatory language are rare. Pupils challenge each other when they witness behaviour that falls short of what is expected. This helps create a positive culture. Pupils understand what it means to make a meaningful contribution to their community. They are confident that staff will take effective action if they report any concerns they may have.

Pupils are motivated in their learning by knowledgeable staff. Teachers provide regular opportunities to revisit what pupils have learned previously. This helps pupils to connect increasingly complex ideas as they move through the curriculum. Teachers know pupils well and make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum. This means disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities can learn well. As a result, pupils achieve well across a breadth of different subjects and in national examinations.

The extra-curricular offer is extensive. Pupils value the opportunities, such as in sports, performing arts, gardening and creative writing, to develop their interests. They praise the different trips to theatres and museums and those abroad, such as the ski trip. Students in the sixth form take their roles as wellbeing ambassadors seriously. They act as positive role models for younger pupils.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching strategies, including effective checks on pupils' learning, are fully embedded across subjects and used with precision to further deepen pupils' learning.
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## About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Carolyn Stirk.

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.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority during the inspection.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 6 unregistered alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Simon Jones

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### Lead inspector:

Stephen Cattell, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Richard Kearsey, Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Morrison, Ofsted Inspector

Ray Lau, Ofsted Inspector

Rachel Cave, 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 17 March 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**1,141**

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

**1,105**

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: 1,153

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

**15.25%**

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**

**5.26%**

Well 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: 3.09%

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

**13.85%**

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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	44.1%	45.4%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	45.5%	45.9%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	41.8%	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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	45.4	46.0	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	45.6	45.9	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	46.5	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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	0.11	-0.03	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	0.16	-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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	25.0%	25.8%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	12.0%	25.8%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	17.9%	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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	37.0	34.9	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	31.7	34.6	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	35.0	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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	-0.42	-0.57	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	-0.53	-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 (revised)	25.0%	53.1%	-28.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	12.0%	53.1%	-41.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	17.9%	52.4%	-34.6 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 (revised)	37.0	50.4	-13.4
2023/24 (final)	31.7	50.0	-18.3
2022/23 (final)	35.0	50.3	-15.3

## 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 (final)	-0.42	0.16	-0.58
2022/23 (final)	-0.53	0.17	-0.70

## 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 (provisional)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	96%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	97%	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 (revised)	29.86	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	32.47	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.75	34.16	Close to average

### 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 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to 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 (2 term)	8.7%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.3%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.0%	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 term)	21.7%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	22.0%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	19.1%	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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