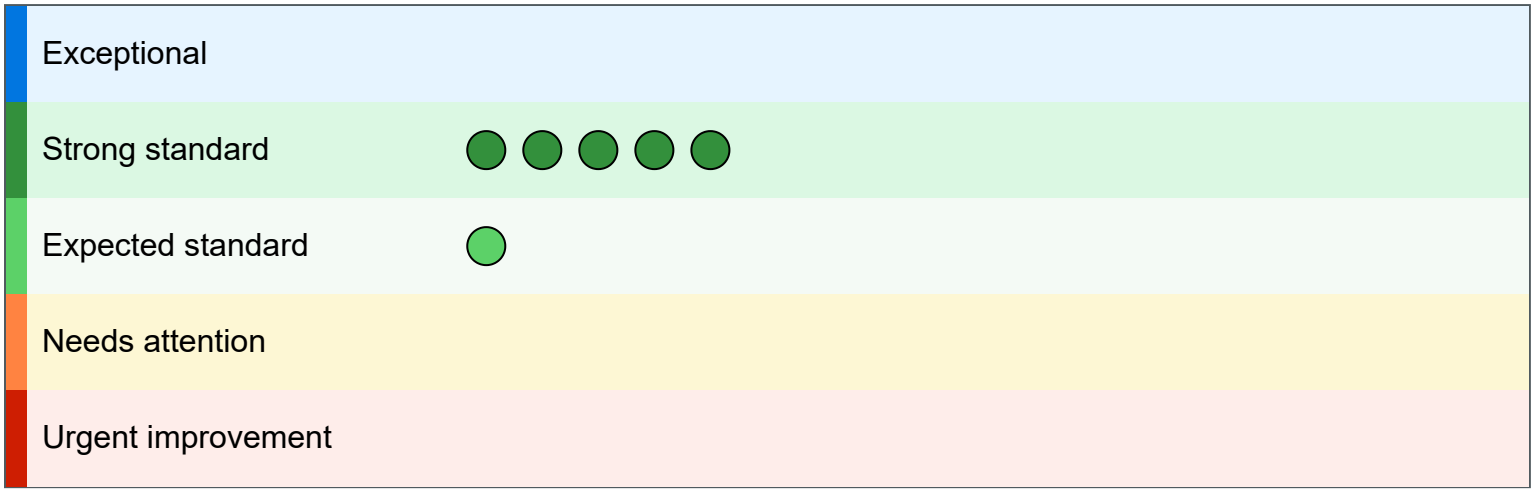
Easthorpe School

Address: 165 Loughborough Road, Ruddington, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG11 6LQ

Unique reference number (URN): 149382

Inspection report: 6 October 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.
- Insufficient evidence: Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

For many pupils, their past educational experiences contributed to significant disaffection towards school. Through highly effective support, pupils reconnect successfully with learning, including those who have been out of education for some time. Pupils, parents and carers are exceedingly positive about the significant difference the school makes to pupils' lives and aspirations.

Pupils make remarkable progress across the breadth of their education and development, often from very low starting points. Pupils with communication and interaction barriers grow in confidence, enabling them to contribute thoughtfully to discussions, demonstrating impressive recall of key learning. Pupils with social and emotional barriers develop significant resilience, enabling them to learn well alongside peers and form secure friendships.

Pupils grow to be impressively fluent readers. Older pupils progress well with vocational qualifications, such as functional skills, and are developing the confidence and ambition to pursue GCSEs and a move on to college. Pupils are very well prepared for their next stages in learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders are resolute in their ambition to improve pupils' attendance. Pupils learn the importance of attending school regularly. Despite many pupils fearing school when they first joined, they strive to meet the school's high expectations. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance rigorously, routinely reviewing the absence of individual pupils. They work closely with pupils, parents and carers to understand the barriers and individual circumstances affecting attendance. Leaders draw on the expertise and support of external agencies when necessary. Through leaders' unwavering tenacity and strong pastoral support, pupils make significant improvements, with many achieving high levels of attendance.

The school's calm, nurturing environment encourages pupils to attend regularly and is highly conducive to their learning. When pupils join the school, leaders prioritise working out how best to support pupils to manage their feelings and emotions. Leaders ensure that staff develop the expertise to provide consistent and intuitive support. They review pupils' support plans continually, revising them swiftly as pupils' needs evolve. Once pupils settle in and feel secure, they grow to show great self-discipline and dedication to their learning. Pupils are highly respectful of staff and one another. Bullying and hurtful behaviours are rare. Should they occur, leaders resolve them swiftly and sensitively.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have an unwavering commitment to ensuring pupils thrive in a highly inclusive environment. Many pupils have not received a positive experience of education before joining the school and have missed significant periods of learning. However, the collective

determination of leaders and staff to transform pupils' lives is woven throughout the school's ethos.

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly through conducting careful checks, working with external professionals, and engaging proactively and supportively with families. They ensure that staff know every possible barrier for every pupil and the support they need to overcome them. This includes the additional challenges disadvantaged pupils and looked-after children may face. Leaders place high value on pupils' views. Pupils contribute meaningfully to decisions about the support they receive, helping them feel heard and fostering a deep sense of belonging.

Leaders ensure that staff receive effective training, enabling staff to understand pupils' individual needs and respond to them well. Pupils also have access to a specialist support team, which includes speech and language, mental health, and occupational therapy. Through rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress, leaders refine and strengthen support to meet pupils' evolving needs. Leaders use pupil premium funding strategically and evaluate its impact carefully to ensure it benefits pupils' learning and development.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

The proprietor and leaders have firmly established a deeply committed vision to helping highly vulnerable pupils reconnect with education, recover from their prior experiences and thrive. The school's ethos is firmly rooted in caring relationships and nurturing support. As pupils, parents and carers readily attest, the school's work has a transformative impact on pupils' lives.

Astute and tenacious leaders draw on their detailed knowledge and insight to evaluate the school's effectiveness and pinpoint priorities for further development. They are navigating the school's growth in pupil numbers and staffing changes successfully. The professional development of staff is a clear priority. Staff are committed to their development and benefit from an extensive, carefully considered programme of high-quality training. Leaders have a clear understanding of the many staff strengths and what they can do better. They provide targeted training and support to address gaps in knowledge and expertise. Staff share leaders' vision and dedication and are proud to work at the school. Their morale is high and they appreciate how leaders consider their workload and wellbeing continually.

The proprietor has robust processes to ensure that the school continues to meet the independent school standards and fulfil its statutory duties. Strengthened oversight is provided further through the school's governing body. The proprietor and governors have the knowledge and expertise needed to challenge and support leaders robustly as they continue to strive for the highest quality provision. Together with leaders, they are steadfast in ensuring that pupils' best interests underpin all aspects of the school's provision.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

The school places pupils' personal development at the centre of its work. Leaders and staff tailor the provision carefully to pupils' individual needs and circumstances. They work closely with pupils to develop their 'All About Me' plans, identifying the support, opportunities and

experiences pupils need to overcome life-limiting barriers and thrive. Staff are highly attuned to pupils' wellbeing and adapt the programme to meet their changing needs.

The pastoral care pupils receive is highly effective. Leaders' deep and detailed understanding of pupils enables them to provide bespoke support that strengthens pupils' social and emotional security. Pupils are confident to share any worries, knowing that they will receive the support they need.

Staff equip pupils with the knowledge they need to stay healthy, keep safe and contribute as responsible citizens in modern society. Pupils learn about relationships and sex education and health education in a developmentally appropriate way. They understand how their bodies change through puberty and why consent matters. Pupils develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They appreciate the importance of freedom of speech while recognising that discrimination has no place in society. They understand that the law protects people's rights and characteristics. Visits to places of worship, such as a gurdwaras, help pupils develop an appreciation of different beliefs and deepen their respect for others' views.

The school prepares pupils very well for their next steps and adult life. Getting out into the community and developing practical life skills are integral to the curriculum. Pupils learn to navigate everyday life confidently through experiences such as swimming, preparing meals, travelling by bus, shopping, using local amenities and visiting the library. Leaders also work creatively with local businesses to ensure that pupils encounter a range of career opportunities. Older pupils benefit from impartial careers guidance to help them make informed decisions about their futures.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that balances academic, social, and emotional learning so pupils feel confident embracing future opportunities. They have sequenced the curriculum carefully so that pupils build knowledge coherently over time. Leaders continue to refine it to reflect the needs of the school's expanding pupil community.

Leaders invest in developing staff expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers follow the planned curriculum, and staff use pupils' education, health and care plans to make adaptations that match their needs. However, recent staffing changes, and a rapidly increasing number of staff, have led to some variability in curriculum delivery and the academic support that pupils receive.

Recognising that many pupils have significant gaps in the essential knowledge of reading, communication and language development when they join the school, leaders place these areas at the heart of the curriculum. They have made notable improvements in teaching this knowledge by ensuring that all staff develop expertise in phonics, for example. However, staff do not have the same knowledge and proficiency in supporting pupils at the early

stages of learning to write. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to improve the consistency of teaching, including writing.

Insufficient evidence

Post-16 provision **Insufficient evidence**

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

Easthorpe is a growing school. Many pupils join disengaged from education, with a history of very low attendance. However, pupils grow to enjoy school and develop a strong appreciation for their education. They gain a deep sense of security and belonging due to the caring and positive relationships that staff build with them. Staff get to know them and their needs remarkably well, responding with highly effective support. Consequently, many pupils go on to maintain high rates of attendance over time.

Pupils are polite and friendly and contribute to the school's calm and welcoming environment. Through learning how to overcome their social and emotional barriers, pupils behave well. Pupils interact positively with one another during sociable breaktimes. If pupils have a worry or concern, they know that staff will listen and help them without delay. Leaders deal with any rare instances of poor behaviour or bullying quickly and effectively.

Through the school's well-considered curriculum, pupils make strong progress from their starting points, steadily overcoming the effects of their previously disrupted education. Within the new key stage 4 provision, the oldest pupils are working towards nationally recognised qualifications. They are developing aspirations for their next stages, including college.

Pupils broaden their horizons through a wide range of trips and community activities. Enterprise and enrichment afternoons enable them to develop interests and talents in areas such as sport, music, art, animal care, coding and creative writing. The student council helps to shape the activities on offer and organises fundraising events, giving pupils a meaningful voice in school life.

Over time at Easthorpe, pupils grow in confidence, resilience and independence, while developing respect for others and an appreciation of individual differences. Given their starting points, pupils' character development is remarkable. The school's personal development programme prepares pupils incredibly well for their next steps in life.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all staff gain the subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise needed so that pupils consistently develop secure foundational knowledge,

particularly in writing.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this 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 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 took place from 6 to 8 October 2026.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, executive headteacher, senior leaders, representatives from the governing body and the chair of the proprietor body during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as a special school. It caters for pupils with autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Most have missed significant periods of education before joining this school.

The school currently has 69 pupils on roll. It is registered to admit 80 pupils. Although the school is registered for pupils up the age of 18, there were no pupils in the post-16 provision at the time of the inspection. This means that inspectors did not have sufficient evidence to reach a grade for this area.

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

The name of the proprietor is Polaris Children's Services. The chair of the proprietor body is Joanne August.

The fees currently charged are £65,251 to £93,474.

The email address of the school is schooloffice@easthorpeschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Laura Austin

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:
Claire Stylianides, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Rachel Tordoff, His Majesty's Inspector
Shaheen Hussain, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

This data is from 6 October 2026

Total pupils

69

School capacity

80

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

69

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

N/A

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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