

Inspection of Norton College Tewkesbury

International Way, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 8UQ

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 July 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

This is a nurturing and friendly school. Typically, pupils arrive having experienced significant disruption to their schooling. Many have gaps in their knowledge. Pupils talk positively about how the school has helped them to overcome these barriers. For example, by rebuilding their confidence and developing the resilience they need to succeed.

The school is ambitious for what pupils can achieve, both academically and personally. Pupils and students in the sixth form benefit from the highly bespoke curriculum they receive. Most enjoy their learning and achieve well from their starting points. They gain a range of appropriate vocational and academic qualifications, including GCSEs.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. Pupils enjoy earning points for showing positive attitudes to learning or following the school's values. Staff take time to form trusting, mutually respectful relationships with pupils. Pupils know that adults will listen to them should any worries or concerns arise. As a result, they feel safe and cared for.

Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities and experiences on offer to them. They enjoy sports such as tennis or kickboxing. Visits to the local community build pupils' independence and prepare them well for the wider world.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the last inspection, there have been several leadership and staffing changes. The new headteacher, together with staff, has brought renewed rigour to key aspects of the school's work. For example, the school has strengthened its systems to evaluate the impact of its actions with regards to pupil behaviour. This has led to a reduction in behavioural incidents and suspensions. Despite this, in some other aspects, the school does not use these systems as effectively as it could. This prevents leaders from understanding what is working well and addressing any shortcomings that exist.

The school has put in place an ambitious curriculum which is broad and balanced. It makes clear the important knowledge and social skills that pupils need to know and when. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The checks the school makes when pupils arrive enable staff to swiftly identify and understand pupils' individual needs. Staff use this information to personalise the curriculum offer. They design learning activities that meet pupils' specific special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They present new information clearly and take time to check for any misconceptions that exist. This enables pupils to build their knowledge over time. For example, in English, students in the sixth form use their knowledge of different writing styles to create detailed reviews of films or

sporting events. Pupils in key stage 3 use their knowledge of weights and measures accurately, when cooking.

In the core subjects of English and mathematics, the school has appropriate strategies in place to check on how well pupils learn and remember the curriculum and make progress towards their EHC plan targets. However, in some wider curriculum subjects, these systems are in their infancy. This means that the school is not able to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge or move pupils on in their learning. This hinders the progress that some pupils make.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive the support they need to become increasingly confident and fluent readers. As they move through the school, pupils learn to read well. By the time they reach the sixth form, students confidently articulate their understanding of concepts such as 'power' and 'imagery' when reading and describing texts by Shakespeare.

Pupils understand how the school expects them to behave. They are polite and courteous. Students in the sixth form set a positive example to younger pupils. They recognise the importance of displaying positive attitudes to learning. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere across the school.

Many pupils have a history of poor attendance prior to arriving at the school. The school works closely with families and external professionals to remove the barriers to attendance that exist. As a result, most pupils attend school regularly.

The school's personal development offer is an integral part of its work. Pupils learn about risks to their safety. They understand how fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, provide people with boundaries and a right to have their say. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and sex education. They know how to spot the signs of a negative relationship and understand why respect is important.

The school's careers advice and guidance programme is a strength. Skilled staff provide pupils with impartial advice. This encourages them to consider their future aspirations and interests. It starts in Year 7 where pupils visit different places of work, such as a local shopping development. As they progress through the school, pupils benefit from work placements. By the end of the sixth form, most students are well prepared for adulthood, gaining employment or opportunities for further study.

The proprietor body and local governing board have a clear vision for the school. They provide effective support and challenge so that the school continues to improve. Staff morale is high. They value the training they receive to support pupils' needs and appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being.

The proprietor body has clear processes in place to ensure that the school continues to meet the independent school standards in full. The checks that it makes ensures

that the school building and grounds are well kept and safe. The proprietor body ensures that the school complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some aspects, the school is still embedding systems to evaluate the impact of its actions. As a result, it is not yet clear what impact these actions are having on pupils. The school needs to ensure that all areas of its work are evaluated effectively so that it can address any short comings and build on the strengths that already exist.
- The school's work to develop assessment is not yet complete. Sometimes, it is not used well enough to check that pupils have remembered the knowledge they have been taught. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not build their knowledge well over time. The school needs to ensure that assessment is used effectively to check on what pupils know and can do, so that they are well prepared for their next stage.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	146519
DfE registration number	916/6021
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10374880
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	17
Number of part-time pupils	8
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Lauren Tallis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,995
Telephone number	01684 423163
Website	www.nortoncollege.org.uk/tewkesbury/
Email address	Tewkesburyoffice@nortoncollege.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 June 2022

Information about this school

- There have been changes to senior leadership and staffing since the last inspection. The current headteacher has been in post since March 2025. The deputy headteacher has been in post since February 2025.
- The school provides education for pupils with SEND. Pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs and all who attend have an education, health and care plan and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- The school is registered to admit up to 50 pupils aged between 11 and 19 years of age.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a change of proprietor body. The new proprietor body is Acorn Care and Education Limited, which is part of the Outcomes First Group.
- Pupils are placed in the school by two local authorities. The local authorities fund these places. The school is approved under section 41.
- The school operates from a single site. It is located at: International Way, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 8UQ. Most pupils are educated in the school building. However, some are educated at home.
- The school had its last standard inspection in June 2022, when it was judged to be good. All independent school standards were met. As part of this standard inspection, a material change inspection took place. This considered the proprietor's request to increase the number of pupils the school is registered to admit.
- 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 school uses three unregistered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. They also met with groups of staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing board. They held telephone conversations with the managing director of the proprietor body. The lead inspector also held telephone conversations with representatives from Gloucestershire local authority and the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, and personal, social and health education (PSHE). For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5 read to an adult.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour and attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. Inspectors also reviewed the school's website.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. The lead inspector toured the premises to check their suitability against the relevant independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also took into consideration the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ben Jordan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David New

Ofsted Inspector

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