



Valley School SEF Summary Table – May 2025

Characteristics of the school

- The Valley School is a special school for students in Key Stages 3 and 4 with learning difficulties. All students have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- In recent years, the school's intake has changed. Due to lack of places in neighbouring SEMH provisions, it now accepts an increasing number of students experiencing social, emotional and mental ill health.
- Currently there are 190 students on roll.
- Due to an in-year financial deficit we have increase the agreed number to 175 to help counteract this. We have more students than our agreed number due to tribunals. This has meant a rise from 155 to 190 in three years.
- Our roll increased again to 190 for September 2024 with the aim of being fully funded for all our students. (HCC have a policy of not paying the place funding for students over the allocate number).
- We moved into our new build in January 2024.
- A large majority of our students are from areas of high deprivation. According to the Government Deprivation Indicators, students live in areas with a mean deprivation of 58% with 45% having no or low qualifications.
- The school has a high Pupil Premium Eligible percentage compared to other local schools in Hertfordshire. This is currently at 50.5%
- Currently 10 students are in the care of the local authority.
- External alternative provision is available to students in all years, where necessary.
- The school also has strong links with the nearby Barnwell School, North Herts Educational Support Centre, North Herts College, other Hertfordshire special schools and the local DSPL, all of which help to support its work and provide greater learning opportunities for students.

Quality of Education (Good)

Subcategory	Evidence with Sources
Curriculum Intent & Implementation	<p>"The school offers a broad and ambitious curriculum for its pupils. It allows pupils to develop their interests and talents, as well as study a range of subjects from the national curriculum." (Ofsted Nov 2024)</p> <p>"Pupils strengthen their knowledge of number as they measure and calculate across subjects such as 'enterprise' and cookery." (Ofsted July 2023)</p> <p>"The school's vocational curriculum helps pupils to develop practical skills in a purposeful way." (Ofsted July 2023)</p>
Reading & Phonics	<p>"The teaching of reading and writing including the use of phonics has also greatly improved." (HIP Visit March 2024)</p> <p>"An approved phonics scheme... is having a positive impact on pupils' reading fluency and accuracy." (Ofsted Nov 2024)</p>
Teaching & Learning	<p>"Teachers present subject matter clearly... check pupils' understanding systematically... and provide clear, direct feedback."</p> <p>"Joint learning walks... focused on: disciplinary knowledge; the ethos for learning; the use of assessment... and behaviour for learning." (HIP March 2024)</p>
Assessment & Outcomes	<p>"Pupils are expected to work hard and achieve well, which they typically do." (Ofsted July 2023)</p> <p>"Most pupils gain qualifications at various levels to continue successfully with their education at the end of Year 11." (Ofsted Nov 2025)</p>

Behaviour and Attitudes (Outstanding)

Subcategory	Evidence with Sources
Pupil Conduct	<p>"Behaviour at The Valley School is exemplary... pupils are taught to use their</p>

	phones sensibly at breaktimes." (Ofsted Nov 2024) "Pupils behave consistently well... they are helped by trusted staff." (Ofsted Nov 2024)
Safety and Welfare	"Pupils are cheerful, polite and enthusiastic learners... they take part in a wide range of activities." (Ofsted July 2023) "Pupils' behaviour is exemplary... they are safe and appreciate the way that adults understand their individual needs." (HIP Nov 2023)
Pupil Voice and Engagement	"PPE learners were settled, safe, engaged in learning, confident, articulate and comfortable to talk with me." (HCC PP Visit 2024-25) "Student questionnaire states that they feel safe, supported and are rewarded for good work." (Nov 2022/May 2023/March 2024)

Personal Development (Outstanding)

Subcategory	Evidence with Sources
Enrichment and Broader Development	"Pupils shop locally... perform in musicals and participate in sporting and arts clubs." (Ofsted Nov 2024) "Whole School Production 'Lion King' with over 60% of students involved."
Careers and Future Planning	"Careers delivery and preparing for life after The Valley scored 100% in all areas through Gatsby Benchmarking." (Dec 2022) "Destinations for the summer 2023 Year 11 cohort... 26 progressed to North Herts College." (HCC PP Visit 2024-25)
Health, Relationships, and Citizenship	"Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and in the community... learn about healthy eating, fitness and appropriate relationships." (Ofsted Nov 2024)

Leadership and Management (Good)

Subcategory	Evidence with Sources
Vision and Strategic Leadership	"The school has been well led through a rapid increase in the number of pupils and moving into a new building." (Ofsted Nov 2024) "Strategic Vision Shared with staff termly including four Whole School Goals."
Staff Development and Engagement	"Staff stated that there are good training opportunities at The Valley School." (Governors' Questionnaire March 2024)

	<p>"We are supporting an ECT through the programme and four UQTs to become qualified."</p>
Governance	<p>"Governors know the school well. They support and challenge school leaders effectively." (Ofsted July 2023)</p> <p>"There is a robust and secure system for managing the performance of all staff." (HIP Sept 2022)</p>
Safeguarding	<p>"Safeguarding is effective, ratified by Ofsted Nov 2024."</p> <p>"Staff refer and record concerns appropriately. Leaders deal with concerns effectively... including seeking help from external agencies."</p>